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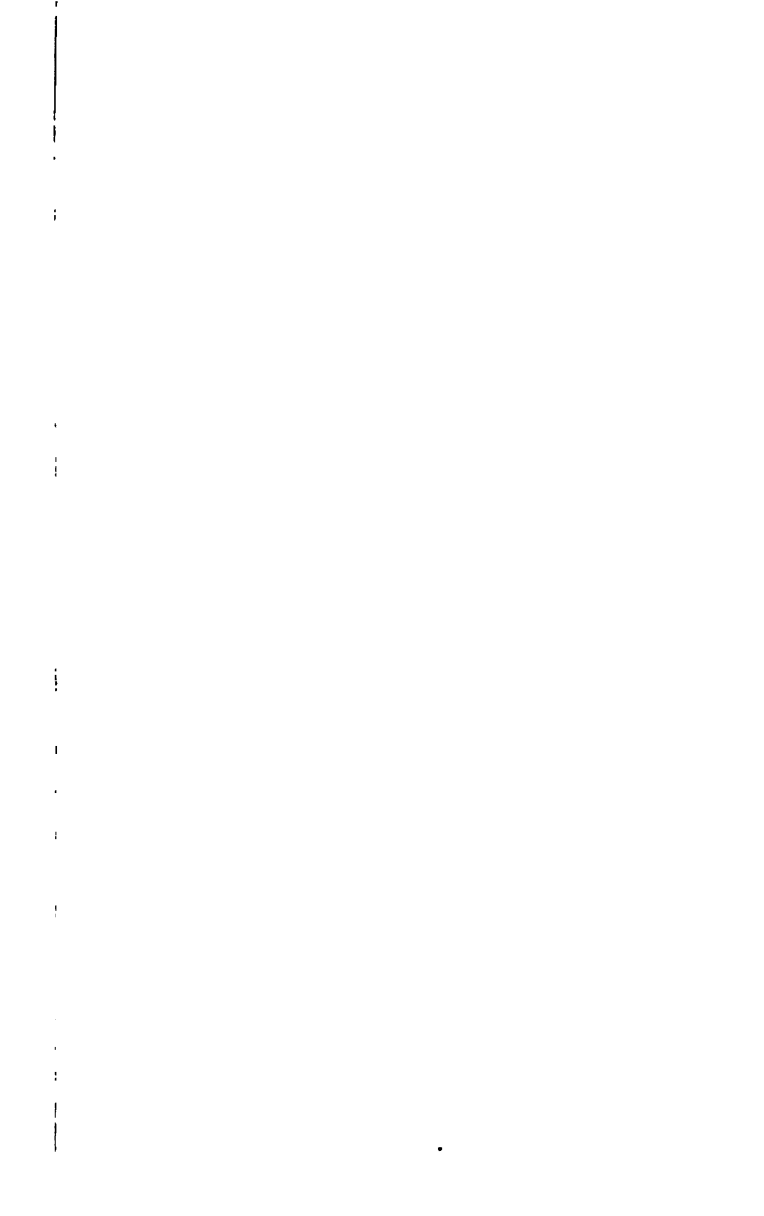


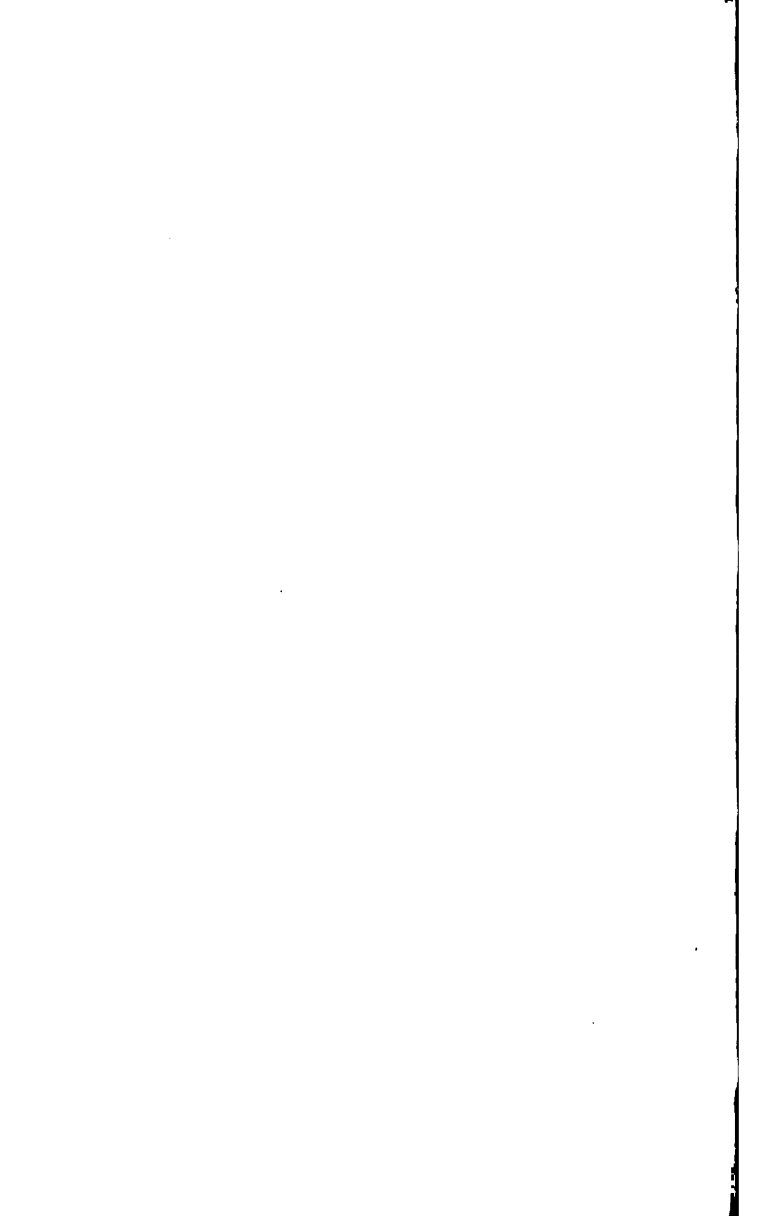
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*Alicia Lunell*

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DFC

Williams





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A S K E T C H

OF THE

P O L I T I C S O F F R A N C E

From the Thirty-first of May 1793, till the  
Twenty-eighth of July 1794,

AND

OF THE SCENES WHICH HAVE PASSED IN  
THE PRISONS OF PARIS.

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B Y

HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

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VOL. II.

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## LETTER I.

Paris.

MY DEAR SIR,

**W**HILE far along the moral horizon of France the tempest became every hour more black and turbulent, the spring, earlier and more profuse of graces than in the climate of England, arose in its unsullied freshness, and formed a contrast at which humanity sickened. The lovely environs of Paris are not, like those of London, so encumbered with houses and buildings that you must travel ten or twelve miles from town to find the coun-

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B

try,

try, but, the moment you have passed the barriers of the city, present you with all the charming variety of vine-clad hills, and fields, and woods, and lawns. Immediately after our release from prison we quitted our apartments in the centre of the town, and tried to shelter ourselves from observation in an habitation situated in the most remote part of the fauxbourg Germain. From thence a few minutes walk led us to the country. But we no longer dared, as we had done the preceding year, to forget awhile the horrors of our situation by wandering occasionally amidst the noble parks of St. Cloud, the wild woods of Meudon, or the elegant gardens of Bellevue, all within an hour's ride of Paris. Those seats, once the residence of fallen royalty, were now haunted by vulgar despots, by revolutionary commissaries, by spies of the police, and sometimes by the sanguinary decemvirs themselves. Often they held their  
festive

festive orgies in those scenes of beauty, where they dared to cast their polluting glance on nature, and tread with profane steps her hallowed recesses. Even the revolutionary jury used sometimes on a decadi, the only day of suspension from their work of death, to go to Marly or Versailles; and, steeped as they were to the very lips in blood, without being haunted by the mangled spectres of those whom they had murdered the preceding day, they saw nature in her most benign aspect, pleading the cause of humanity and mercy, and returned to feast upon the groans of those whom they were to murder on the morrow.

Those regions of decorated beauty being now forbidden ground, we confined our walks to some pasturage lands near the town, which were interspersed with a few scattered hamlets, and skirted by hills, and were so unfrequented, that we heard no sounds except the sheep-bell,

and the nightingales, and saw no human figure but an old peasant with a white beard, who together with a large black dog took care of the flock. It was in these walks that the soul, which the scenes of Paris petrified with terror, melted at the view of the soothing landscape, and that the eye was lifted up to heaven with tears of resignation mingled with hope. I have no words to paint the strong feeling of reluctance with which I always returned from our walks to Paris, that den of carnage, that slaughter-house of man. How I envied the peasant his lonely hut! for I had now almost lost the idea of social happiness. My disturbed imagination divided the communities of men but into two classes, the oppressor and the oppressed; and peace seemed only to exist with solitude.

On the 15th of Germinal (the beginning of April,) the committee of public safety,

safety, or rather of public extermination, caused a law to be passed, ordering all the former nobility and strangers to leave Paris within ten days, under the penalty of being put out of the law; which meant, that if found in Paris after that period, they were to be led to the scaffold without a trial, as soon as their persons were identified. This law, to which my family and myself were subject, was a part of the plan of general proscription that Robespierre had formed against nobles and foreigners; and which he was now impatient to put in force. We were ordered by the decree, after choosing the place of our retreat, to present ourselves at the revolutionary committee of our respective sections, who delivered to each of us not a passport, but what was called a pass, on which was written a declaration that we left Paris in conformity to the law of the 26th of Germinal. Thus were we condemned to wander into the country with this



pass, which was the mark of Cain upon our foreheads, and which under pain of imprisonment we were to deposit at the municipality where we bent our course; and we were also condemned to present ourselves every twenty-four hours before the municipality and inscribe our names on a list, which was to be dispatched every decade to the committee of public safety. And lest the country municipalities should mistake the intentions of the committee, and treat particular individuals with lenity upon their producing testimonies of their attachment to the cause of the revolution, these devoted victims were ordered by a decree to burn every certificate of civism of which they might happen to be in possession. We chose for the place of our retreat a little village half a mile distant from Marly, and with hearts overwhelmed with anguish bade adieu to my sister, who, being married to a Frenchman, was exempted from

from the law ; and we were once more driven from our home, not to return under the penalty of death. Our neighbours came weeping to our gate to take leave of us ; and the poor, who were the only class which now dared to utter a complaint, murmured loudly at the injustice of the decree. We were obliged to pass the square of the revolution, where we saw the guillotine erected, the crowd assembled for the bloody tragedy, and the gens d'armes on horseback, followed by victims who were to be sacrificed, entering the square. Such was the daily spectacle which had succeeded the painted shows, the itinerant theatres, the mountebank, the dance, the song, the shifting scenes of harmless gaiety, which used to attract the cheerful crowd as they passed from the Thuilleries to the Champs Elisées.

When we reached the barrier we were stopped by a concourse of carriages filled

with former nobles, and were obliged to wait till our passés were examined in our turn. The procession at the gate was singular and affecting. Most of the fugitives having, like ourselves, deferred their departure till the last day, and it being the forfeiture of our heads to be found in Paris the day following, the demand for carriages was so great, and the price exacted by those who let them out, and who knew the urgency of the case, so exorbitant, that a coach or chariot was a luxury which fell only to the lot of a favoured few. The greater number were furnished with cabriolets, which seemed from their tottering condition somewhat emblematical of decayed nobility; and many who found even these crazy vehicles too costly, journeyed in the carts which transported their furniture, seated upon the chairs they were conveying to their new abodes.

We reached our little dwelling at the  
hour

hour of sun-set. The hills were fringed with clouds, which still reflected the fading colours of the day; the woods were in deep shadow; a soft veil was thrown over nature, and objects indistinctly seen were decorated by imagination with those graces which were most congenial to the feelings of the moment. The air was full of delicious fragrance, and the stillness of the scene was only disturbed by sounds the most soothing in nature, the soft rustling of the leaves, or the plaintive notes of the wood-pigeon. The tears which the spectacle of the guillotine had petrified with horror, now flowed again with melancholy luxury. Our habitation was situated within a few paces of the noble park of Marly; and the deserted alleys overgrown with long grass—the encumbering fragments of rock, over which once fell the mimic cascades, whose streams no longer murmur—the piles of marble which once formed the

bed of crystal basons—the scattered machinery of the jets d’eaux, whose sources are dried—the fallen statues—the defaced symbols of feudality—the weeds springing between the stone steps of the ascent to the deserted palace—the cobwebbed windows of the gay pavillions, were all in union with that pensiveness of mind which our present circumstances naturally excited. And here, where we could see nothing of Paris but the distant dome of the Pantheon, we should have been less unhappy, if we had not too well known that the committee of public safety had not sent nobles and foreigners into the country to enjoy the freshness of rural gales, or the beauty of the opening spring, but as the first step towards a general proscription; and as we passed every evening through the park of Marly, in order to appear before the municipality, that appalling idea “breathed a browner horror over the woods.” We  
were

were again rescued from the general danger by the two benevolent commissaries of the revolutionary committee of our section, who when they came to conduct us to prison had treated us with so much gentleness, who had afterwards reclaimed us of the administration of police, and who now, unsolicited and even unasked, went to the committee of public safety, declared they would answer for us with their lives, and caused us to be put into requisition ; a form which enabled us to return to Paris, and thus snatched us from the class of the suspected and the proscribed. To their humanity we probably owe our existence ; and I shall ever recollect with gratitude that noble courage which led them amidst the cruel impulse of revolutionary government, the movement of which was accelerated as it went on, to pause and succour the unfortunate. I have the satisfaction of adding, that those commissaries are now at liberty

on account of their general good conduct, while scarcely any other members of revolutionary committees have escaped imprisonment. Our benefactors have indeed a right to this honourable exception; who, although appointed the immediate agents of terror, the order of the day, regulated their actions by the eternal code of humanity.

A short time before our departure from Paris, the guillotine, upon which so many innocent victims had been sacrificed, for once streamed with the blood of the guilty :

“ The guilty only were of life bereft :

“ Alas! the guilty only then were left !”

LUCAN'S PHARSALIA.

One of the secrets of Robespierre's government was to employ as the step-ladders of his ambition men whose characters were marked with opprobrium, or stained with crimes. Such men were best suited

suit to his purpose ; since they were not likely to pause in the execution of his orders, depending upon his favour, perhaps, for shelter from legal punishment ; and when they had fulfilled the part he allotted them, and he no longer stood in need of their agency, he had sufficient address to lead them to make some extravagant proposition, which he denominated *ultra-revolutionary*, and for which he sent them to the scaffold, even with the approbation of the public. Such was the sentiment excited by the execution of Hebert, one of the chiefs of the municipality of Paris, whose arrest by the commission of twelve, previously to the thirty-first of May, had served the conspirators as the signal for ringing that fatal tocsin which was the knell of liberty. Hebert was the man who upon the trial of Marie Antoinette outraged all the feelings of nature, by an accusation which wrung from her bursting heart that affecting appeal



peal to every mother who was present. It was he who loaded her with the indignity of gross abuse, and poured the bitterness of insult into the cup of death.

He soon after acted again at the revolutionary tribunal the part of evidence against the twenty-one; those virtuous patriots, the Sidneys and the Ruffels of their country, whose martyrdom has been avenged, not as they wished, but as they predicted, by scenes of universal desolation and despair.

Hebert was commonly called Pere du Chesne, on account of a daily paper he published, bearing that title. In this paper he professed to tread in the steps of Marat, and indeed he proved himself worthy to be his lineal successor. He had the same insatiable thirst of blood; he demanded with the same vehemence the heads of all conspirators, nobles, bankers, writers and merchants, the faction of federalists, and the faction of Pitt and Cobourg.

Cobourg. Those mild demands were breathed in the language of the lowest vulgar: every line was enforced by an oath, and every period rounded by an imprecation. Camille Desmoulins, after drawing the character of this journal, concluded by saying that it was written "pour faire les délices de Coblentz, et le seul espoir de Pitt\*." Such was Hebert! who having succeeded with his colleagues of the municipality in accomplishing what they called the revolution of the 31st of May, felt with indignation that his revolutionary genius was forced to bend before the genius of Robespierre, and determined to immortalize the month of Ventose by a new revolution.

They had hitherto met with such splendid success in insurrection, that they began to think it was no very difficult enterprise, now that the routine

\* To form the delight of Coblentz, and the only hope of Pitt.

was known. It was but to ring the tocsin, beat the generale, put the city under arms, take the direction of the military force, overthrow the committee of public safety, and seize the reins of government. The ides of March, however, proved as fatal to the dominion of the red cap, as they had heretofore done to that of the purple robe. In vain Hebert mounted the tribune at the Cordeliers, asserted that tyranny existed, and caused a black veil to be thrown over the table of the rights of man—In vain the section of Marat declared itself in insurrection: the other sections of Paris were of opinion, that to go from the committee of public safety to the municipality was flying from Scylla to Charybdis; and though all France groaned under the tyranny of the committee, there was little hope that the wounds of the bleeding country would be healed by men who were the leaders of massacre, and the preachers of the agrarian

rian law. The Parisians therefore applauded the decree which sent Hebert and twenty of his co-adjutors in revolutionary crimes to that sanguinary tribunal, which, after a mockery of trial, ordered them to execution, "and bade the cruel feel the pains they gave." There appeared so much of retribution in the circumstances that attended the death of Hebert and his colleagues, that it seemed as if Heaven were visibly stretching forth its arm to punish the guilty. For it is remarkable enough, that they were not tried for any of the multiplied crimes they had committed, but for having asserted that tyranny existed : a sacred truth which every heart swelled to acknowledge, though no lips but theirs had dared to give it utterance.—The behaviour of Hebert and his associates upon the approach of death was far different from that of the innocent sufferers who had consciences void of reproach. Along  
those

those subterraneous galleries where all the light which entered was "darkness visible," terrific phantoms covered with blood seemed to pursue their steps, and with menacing looks prepare to drag them to abysses of deeper horror: they fancied they saw the headless trunks of murdered victims encumbering the ground; they heard human groans and shrieks sounding hollow through the vaulted passages; while the knife of the guillotine, like Macbeth's aërial dagger, hung suspended before their affrighted imagination. Anacharsis Clootz, a Prussian baron and a member of the national convention, known by the title which he conferred upon himself, of orator of the human race, suffered death with this band of ruffians. He was also a preacher of blood; but, cruelty being the order of the day, what most distinguished him from others was not the ferocity of his principles, but the chimeras of his imagination.

tion. His publications which were numerous, were always dated *Paris, chef li'u du globe\** ;” and he seriously proposed, that as soon as all the potentates of the earth were overthrown, an event of which he had a bird’s eye view from the beginning of the French revolution, the people of every nation should send their representatives to Paris, who should be honoured with seats in the national assembly of France, and there form an universal republic, of which France should be the centre, and the other kingdoms of the world the departments. He proposed for instance, that as soon as the deputies of the English nation arrived, England should take the name of Le departement de la Tamise†.

Soon after the memorable 10th of August, Anacharsis marched to the bar of the legislative assembly at the head of a

\* Paris, capital of the globe.

† The department of the Thames.

number of men he had hired to represent the natives of every quarter of the globe, and who were clad in the respective dresses of the people they personated. This embassy of the human race declared, by the organ of their common orator Anacharsis, their admiration of the French republic, and their attachment to its cause. The conclusion of this drama however was less splendid than the opening scene at the bar of the convention; for the next morning the door of Anacharsis was beset with Italians, Germans, Swedes, Poles, Jews, Turks, and Russians, clamorously demanding to be paid: but none were more noisy in their vociferations than a Calmuck Tartar, and an Indian of the banks of the Ohio, who menaced their orator with the vengeance of the whole fauxbourg of St. Antoine, if he refused to pay them for the loss of their day's labour, and the hire of their dresses. Anacharsis, after much altercation,

tercation, came to a compromise with the deputation of the human race, who departed not very well satisfied with their champion.—Cloutz met death with more firmness than might have been expected from his general character, and his atheistical principles. Hebert and his colleagues passed their time, when together, like the fallen spirits in Milton, in mutual accusation, till Cloutz with a loud voice recited to them those well-known lines :

“ Je revois cette nuit, que de mal consumé,  
Côté à côté d'un gueux on m'avoit inhumé ;  
Et que, blessé pour moi d'un pareil voisinage,  
En mort de qualité je lui tins ce langage.”

This citation had the effect he wished : they became reconciled to each other ; and Cloutz, whose only apprehension was lest any of them should die in religious belief, preached atheism to them till their last sigh.

The death of Hebert was the signal  
for



for throwing off the hideous masquerade of sansculottism, in which all the world had been arrayed during the winter, in submissive deference to his interpretation of equality. Immediately after his execution, the scene suddenly changed: black wigs, red caps, sailors' jackets, and pantaloons were cast aside; and the eye was refreshed with the sight of combed locks, clean linen, and decent apparel;—while the women, who for some months had reluctantly bound up their hair beneath the round cap of the peasant, now unfolded their tresses, perfumed and powdered, to the vernal gales, and decorated in whatever manner they thought proper, provided the national cockade formed one of their ornaments.

LET-

## LETTER II.

THE execution of Hebert and his colleagues was soon followed by that of a considerable number of the mountain deputies, among whom were Danton and Camille Desmoulins, names not unknown to fame in the annals of the revolution. Danton had acted a distinguished part on the political theatre, before Robespierre had been heard of; and Camille Desmoulins, on the day preceding the taking of the Bastille, had the glory of being the first man in France who placed the national cockade in his hat, and called upon his fellow-citizens to shake off the fetters of despotism. And surely it was glorious to be a leader of the revolution; for, although the sun of liberty, like the orb of day when seen

through opposing mists, has been turned into blood, its dawning beams were radiant, and it will again shake off the foul vapours that have hung around it, and spread that un sullied light which exhilarates all nature.

Robespierre was not deterred from marking Danton and Camille Desmoulins as his victims, by the consideration that Danton had saved him at the moment when Louvet's representation of his crimes on the 2d of September had so strongly excited the indignation of the convention, that a decree of accusation was on the point of being hurled against him; and that Camille Desmoulins had been his school-fellow and his friend. But the tyrant felt that Danton was too "near the throne;" and Camille Desmoulins had awakened all his fury by an appeal which he made to the people, in a paper called the "Old Cordelier," and which found an echo

in every heart. The excessive severity of the revolutionary law against the suspected had excited Desmoulins' indignation; and in a happy parallel between the capricious tyrannies of the Roman emperors and those of the committees of government\*, he expanded the glowing precision of Tacitus into charges so extremely ludicrous, that they honoured lord Shaftesbury's axiom, that ridicule is the test of truth. This publication made some atonement to humanity for the mischiefs which his former writings had produced; above all, that cruel pleasantry upon the party of the Gironde, on which their act of accusation was founded. The atonement came too late; tyranny was established; and Camille Desmoulins perished, to use his own words, "for having shed one tear over the unhappy."

Several other deputies suffered at the

\* See Appendix, No. I.

same time ; and Camille Desmoulins observed when he was going to the scaffold, “ Robespierre fait des coups percés de la convention,” alluding to the mode of cutting down the forests in France by portions, which are marked to be hewn at certain periods. The person most regretted among the deputies who now perished was Philipeaux, who having been sent on a mission to the Vendée, made known at his return the horrors of which he had been a witness, and was dragged to the scaffold for having dared to lift up the veil which the conspirators had thrown over their crimes. Fabre d’Eglantine, who had been one of the founders of the revolutionary government and the auxiliary of Robespierre, perished unlamented. He possessed fine talents for literature, and had written a celebrated comedy, entitled *Philinte*. It was observed, that he had carried the spirit of intrigue which prevailed in his comedy  
into

into the part he had acted as legislator. The love of fame, the prevailing passion of authors, he felt strong in death ; and all his thoughts seemed fixed upon a comedy of five acts, which he had deposited at the committee of public safety, and of which he was afraid Billaud Varennes would take the credit. Fabre d'Eglantine was also the author of the new French calendar. Danton, while at the Conciergerie, often conversed with the prisoners across the bars of his dungeon. He seemed ashamed of having been duped by Robespierre, with whom, by means of a common friend, he had an interview a few days before he was arrested, in order that they might come to an explanation. Danton, after a long conversation, finding that he was unable to move the implacable Robespierre, who listened to him with a look of insulting malignity, shed some tears, and left the room, saying, " Je vois que mon sort

est décidé, mais ma mort fera votre ruine\*.” This prediction was fulfilled ; for no sooner had Robespierre rid himself of all his rivals than he pressed forward with a more rapid course towards his own destruction. Danton in his dungeon expatiated continually on the charms of nature, on the beauties of rural scenery, and the peace of rural shades. “In revolutions,” cried he, “the power always remains in the hands of villains. It is better to be a poor fisherman than to govern men. Those fools ! they will cry ‘ Long live the republic !’ on seeing me pass to the scaffold.—This day last year I caused the revolutionary tribunal to be instituted. I ask pardon of God and of men ; it was not that it should become the scourge of humanity ; it was to prevent the renewal of the

\* “ I see that my fate is decided, but my death will be your ruin.”

massacres

massacres of September." Camille Desmoulins and Danton, who had both possessed considerable powers of eloquence, defended themselves at the tribunal with so lofty a spirit, and treated their judges with so much disdain, that at length irritated by their contempt and the sallies of their wit, and impatient at their perseverance in vindicating themselves when it was determined they should die, the public accuser sent a letter to the convention, informing them that the prisoners were in a state of revolt against the tribunal. The committee of public safety caused a decree to be passed which put them out of the law, and sent instantly to execution all such of the accused as dared to insult their judges. In vain Danton called upon Barrere, upon Billaud Varennes, and upon other members of the committee of public safety to appear in evidence. Danton was left to his fate, and sent with his colleagues to



execution. At the gate of the Conciergerie, while the executioner was placing the condemned deputies in the carts, Danton amused the crowd who were looking on by many sportive observations. He said to Fabre d'Eglantine, who was a poet, "Eh bien, nous deviendrons tous poetes, nous allons tous faire des vers \*." On his way to the scaffold his head was bare, and many persons were struck with its resemblance to the medals of Socrates. He behaved with remarkable firmness, conversing with those who were placed in the same cart, and sometimes answering the cries of the populace by looks of strong indignation. When he was tied to the plank he cast his eyes upwards to the fatal knife, and his countenance and figure assumed an expression of magnanimity with which the spectators were deeply penetrated.

\* An equivoque on the word *vers*, which in French signifies worms as well as verses.

“ Pale heads of Marian chiefs are borne on high,  
 Or heap'd together on the forum lie ;  
 There join the meeting slaughters of the town,  
 There each performing villain's deeds are known.”

LUCAN'S PHARSALIA.

A proof of the horrible oppression under which we groaned, was, that we lamented the fate of Danton—of Danton, the minister of justice on the 2d of September, and one of the murderers of liberty on the 31st of May ! Yet with all these crimes upon his head, Danton still possessed some human affections : his mind was still awake to some of the sensibilities of our nature ; his temper was frank and social, and humanity in despair leant upon him as a sort of refuge from its worst oppressor. A week after the death of Camille Desmoulins, his wife, a charming woman of twenty-three years of age, was led to the scaffold. For her fate no eye except those of her barbarous judges refused a tear. Her execution

forms an epocha in the annals of the revolutionary government; since on that occasion, for the first time, a conspiracy supposed in a prison became the pretext for murder, and multitudes afterwards perished the victims of that fatal invention. Camille Desmoulins was in habits of friendship with Arthur Dillon, an Irish general, who had bravely defended the pass in the forest of Argonne against the Prussian army, and who held the highest rank in the service of the republic. Soon after the 31st of May, he was arrested with multitudes *soupçonnés d'être suspects\**, and was confined in the prison of the Luxembourg. His hopes of regaining his liberty rested upon the influence of his friend Camille Desmoulins, and he was deeply affected by the intelligence of his being sent to the revolutionary tribunal. In his affliction he made use of some imprudent expressions to a fel-

\* Upon a *suspicion* of being *suspected*.

low prisoner, and seemed to flatter himself with the hope that the people would not suffer such a patriot as Desmoulins to perish. The wretch to whom Dillon confided these sentiments had the atrocity to write a denunciation against him to the committee of general safety, with the view of purchasing his own freedom by the life of his unfortunate companion. Dillon had also, a few days before Desmoulins perished, written a letter to his wife, expressing his sympathy in her misfortunes, and his hope that the innocence of her husband would yet triumph. In this letter Dillon enclosed three thousand livres. All these circumstances were made known to the committee; and a few days after the execution of Desmoulins, Dillon, the turnkey to whom he had offered the letter, and Madame Desmoulins in the first transports of grief upon the loss of a husband whom she tenderly loved, were sent by an order

of the committee to the Conciergerie to take their trial at the revolutionary tribunal. It appeared upon the trial that the turnkey had refused to take the letter; upon which Dillon had slipped it into his pocket; which the turnkey perceiving, returned it to him immediately, and Dillon tore it in pieces. Madame Desmoulins, it was therefore clear, had never received the letter or the three thousand livres enclosed. She answered the interrogatories of her judges with the candour of innocence, and the sweet complacency of her manner sensibly affected the spectators. Those assassins in the robes of justice condemned Dillon to die as the author of a conspiracy in the prisons against the security of the French people; the turnkey was sent to death for having had sufficient humanity not to make a declaration to the police of Dillon's proposition respecting the letter; and the unfortunate Madame Desmoulins

lins was dragged to the scaffold because a letter was written to her which it was clearly proved had never been sent. In the first anguish of separation from the object of our affections, death ceases to be an evil; and Madame Desmoulins deplored her husband too tenderly to regret that they were going to be re-united in a happier state of existence. She dressed herself in white, and with some care; and went with a placid smile upon her countenance to execution, conversing with her companions in the cart, particularly with the wife of Hebert, who was put to death at the same time, and met her fate with equal firmness. It was one of the singular chances of these revolutionary moments, that Camille Desmoulins, who with the pointed shafts of his wit had overthrown the idol of the populace Hebert, perished himself but a fortnight later; and that his own wife and the wife of Hebert, seated on the same

stone in the Conciergerie, deplored their mutual loss, and were led together to the scaffold. The people, as Madame Desmoulins passed along the streets to execution, could not resist uttering exclamations of pity and admiration. “Comme elle est belle ! elle a l’air si doux ! quel dommage qu’elle va périr\* !” At the foot of the scaffold she embraced the wife of Hebert, bade her companions in the cart farewell, and resigned herself to the executioner with the serenity of an angel: Dillon went to death with great composure, and, as he passed to execution, bowed to a friend of his and mine whom he saw in the street. Far different from the meek and placid resignation with which Madame Desmoulins made the sacrifice of life in all its bloom and freshness, was the behaviour of Chaumette procureur of the commune, and Gobet

\* “How beautiful she is ! how mild she looks ! what a pity she should perish !”

the

the archbishop of Paris, who perished at the same time. Their aspect testified that Death appeared to their perturbed spirits, not in the form he wears to suffering innocence, to whom he comes the messenger of peace, but armed with all his stings, and clad in all his terrors.

Chaumette, one of the leaders of the conspiracy of the 31st of May, saw himself dragged to the scaffold by the man whom he had powerfully contributed to raise to supreme eminence, and for a measure by which he expected to confirm his own popularity, which was overthrowing the altars of the catholic church. And Gobet, the archbishop of Paris, a weak old man, whom Chaumette and Anacharsis Clootz had persuaded to go with the municipality to the bar of the convention, and at sixty-seven years of age declare that the profession of his life had been imposture, that he renounced the christian faith and his ecclesiastical  
dignity,



dignity, and demanded that the churches consecrated to religious worship should henceforth become the temples of Reason, was punished for his apostacy with death. Robespierre embraced the new doctrine till the church was despoiled of all the treasures with which superstition had enriched it, and soon after abolished the *decadary* feasts of the goddess Reason, and sent her high priests Gobet and Chaumette to the guillotine. One of the few instances of fortitude in death exemplified by persons who had neither the consciousness of innocence nor the sentiment of sympathy to sooth their minds in so severe a trial, was that of the former duke of Orleans, in whose life nothing was worthy of applause except his manner of leaving it. The remembrance of the vote he had given against his unfortunate relation Lewis XVI. from motives of personal vengeance and ambition, could not but gnaw upon his heart, and depress his

his spirit, and must have been mingled not only with a feeling of indignation against the wretches who made him suffer upon false pretences, but with all the anguish of remorse for having joined their party; by which act of debasement he had incurred not only guilt, but its speedy punishment. Yet notwithstanding such reflections could not fail to embitter his last moments, he went to execution with a calm dignity worthy of a better mind. Nor did he gratify the populace by betraying any emotion when the cart in which he was placed stopped for ten minutes before the gate of the Palais-Royal, the scene of a life of luxurious pleasures. He looked at the building with apparent unconcern; and whatever pangs of recollection might struggle at his heart, his behaviour expressed no sentiment but that of magnanimity till he expired.

The resignation and courage with  
which

which the victims of this cruel tyranny in general resigned life were truly admirable. Many young persons, after receiving their act of accusation, composed verses written with a pencil at the table where they partook their last repast with their fellow-prisoners. The following, written by a young man of twenty-four years of age, to his mistress, the night before his execution, are simple and affecting :

## I.

L'heure avance où je vais mourir,  
 L'heure sonne et la mort m'appelle :  
 Je n'ai point de laches désirs,  
 Je ne fuirai point devant elle :  
 Je meurs plein de foi, plein d'honneur :  
 Mais je laisse ma douce amie  
 Dans le veuvage et la douleur—  
 Ah ! je dois regretter la vie !

## II.

Demain, mes yeux inanimés  
 Ne s'ouvriront plus sur tes charmes ;  
 Tes beaux yeux à l'amour fermés  
 Demain seront noyés de larmes.

La

La mort glacera cette main  
 Qui m'unit à ma douce amie !  
 Je ne vivrai plus sur ton sein—  
 Ah ! je dois regretter la vie !

# IMITATION.

## I.

The hour that calls to death is near,  
 It brings to me no throb of fear ;  
 The breast that honour arms, can brave  
 The mûrd'rer's steel, th' untimely grave ;  
 But thou, to whom I gave my heart,  
 From thee for ever must I part,  
 And leave my mourning love to sigh ?  
 Ah, 'tis a cruel task to die !

## II.

To-morrow, my clos'd eyes no more  
 Shall gaze on beauty I adore :  
 To-morrow, sadd'ning every grace,  
 Unceasing tears shall bathe thy face ;  
 To-morrow, chill'd by death's cold grasp,  
 This hand no longer thine shall clasp ;  
 From thee for ever I shall fly—  
 Ah, 'tis a cruel task to die !

Among the crowds who were led to  
 the guillotine, two persons only displayed  
 strong

strong marks of dismay and terror. One of these persons was Madame du Barry, the mistress of Lewis XV. She had been induced to leave England, where she passed some time after the revolution, and return to France, in order to secure her property ; and soon after the 31st of May was led from her beautiful pavilion at Lucienne, to a prison in Paris, by one of the agents of *terrorism*, who, I am sorry to add, was an Englishman. The prisons, to use a French mode of expression, in a short time became the anti-chambers of the scaffold ; and Madame du Barry's mind was impressed strongly with a presage of her fate. Whenever the door of her chamber in the prison opened, she was seized with violent trembling, and sometimes with fainting fits. At length the fatal summons to the revolutionary tribunal arrived. The chief evidence against her was a negro slave, whom she had reared from an infant, and

to .

to whom she was so much attached, that he was generally to be found in her apartments; and one day Lewis XV. sportively created him governor of Lucienne, with a pension of six hundred livres a year, which this viper, who stung the bosom that cherished him, still enjoys.

One of the most flagrant testimonies which were produced of Madame du Barry's counter-revolutionary principles was Mr. Pitt's picture, which she said had been given to her the night before her departure from London by lord Thurlow. This unfortunate woman was condemned to die; and a person of my acquaintance who was at that time a prisoner in the Conciergerie told me, that she was deluded with the promise of pardon provided she would discover the spot where she acknowledged that some treasures were concealed; but no sooner were they found, than she was ordered to execution. During her passage thither she appeared almost

almost dead, and leaned her head upon the shoulder of the executioner. But when she reached the square of the revolution, the sight of the instrument of death rallied her sinking spirits, and called forth the most cruel agonies of reluctant nature. She rent the air with her shrieks, and was deaf to the expostulations of Noil, a deputy of the Gironde who perished at the same time, and who encouraged her to resign herself to a fate which was inevitable. Her convulsed frame acquired extraordinary strength: she struggled with her executioners, and, after a conflict at which humanity shudders, was forced to undergo the fatal stroke, and released from frantic desperation.

With Madame du Barry perished the banker Vanderuyver, and his two sons, accused of being her accomplices in sending money into England, and also of having aided the knights of the poniard, as they were called, in the chateau of the Tuilleries.

leries on the memorable 10th of August, although twenty-five witnesses attended to prove that Vanderuyver had not quitted his house during the whole of that day. But those who first appeared in his favour being arrested as they went out of court, the others made their escape, and left this unhappy family to their fate.

Their real crime was their great wealth, which it was thought expedient to seize. On this account bankers were the objects of particular proscription; for although the great revolutionary financier Cambon had one day called them all together, and favoured them with an harangue of considerable length upon the value of paper money, and the worthlessness of gold, which he asserted every real lover of his country ought to despise as dross, and of which he exhorted them to rid themselves as fast as possible; it was feared that in spite of this precious morsel of eloquence, an obstinate attachment to metallic



tallic coin still lurked in the hearts of the bankers, who were for the most part punished for this grovelling predilection with death. Of this number was Laborde, once the banker of the court, and now guilty of a revenue of two millions of livres. This respectable old man was dragged to the scaffold at seventy-six years of age, although since the first epocha of the revolution he had given unquestionable proofs of his attachment to its cause, and the magnificence of his donations were more than proportionate to his wealth. His first patriotic gift was twenty thousand louis ; he had sent all the fine horses with which his stables were filled to the municipality ; he had lodged troops of national guards at his house ; and above all, he had been the father of the country where his fine seat of Meriville was placed. The year before his death I had passed some very agreeable days at that noble mansion, where strangers properly recom-

recommended were received and entertained with the most splendid hospitality. The pleasure-grounds had been formed in a flat situation unfavourable to beauty. With immense labour and expence pastoral hills arose, and jutting rocks hung over crystal waters, or were worn into fragments by the fall of lavish cascades. A beautiful Grecian temple reared its Corinthian pillars upon a broad green ascent, and amidst the deep recesses of spreading oaks a monument was erected to Captain Cook. Perhaps the decorated scenes of Meriville are somewhat too richly hung with ornaments; but in creating this blooming Eden, which was the work of years, Mons. Laborde had given employment to the whole country. For a great extent of space round his dwelling no wants were felt which his munificence was not eager to relieve; and when the eye saw him, it blessed him. Nor was the  
good

good he conferred confined to the precincts of his own possessions. The Paris markets were often supplied with such articles of living as were most wanted, at the very time when its owner was languishing in prison. With tears and lamentations his tenants heard of his confinement. Whole villages and municipalities crowded to the bar of the convention, and claimed the enlargement of their common benefactor, but in vain. The rich spoils of his chateau were too tempting to be resisted, the seizure of his immense property was an expedient of finance, and as a preliminary step to its confiscation he was put to death.

I have mentioned among the multitudes who perished, that Madame du Barry and one other person only were remarked for having betrayed symptoms of weakness and terror in their last moments. You will be surprised to  
hear

hear that this person was general Cuf-  
tine.

Who combats bravely is not therefore brave :  
He fears a death-bed like the meanest slave.

This unfortunate general, although accustomed to look upon death with intrepidity in the ranks of battle, shrunk from it in a form of horror for which he was unprepared. His son, an amiable and accomplished young man, who suffered a few months after as the accomplice of his father, because he had given proofs of filial affection, behaved with admirable courage. I shall transcribe a letter which he sent to his wife on the day of his execution\*.

This interesting young woman had the courage, during the trial of her father-in-law the general, to sit at his feet at the tribunal, to wipe the damps from his

\* See Appendix, No. II.

brow, to animate his failing spirits, and calm the agitation of his mind by her soothing attentions. After seeing her husband dragged to the scaffold, she was thrown into prison, from which she was one of the last persons released.

Early in the spring Madame Elizabeth was brought before the revolutionary tribunal. The only crime that could be imputed to her was that she was the sister of a king, and had shewn that steadfast fidelity to her brother, which in generous minds, whatever might be their political opinions, would have excited sentiments of esteem and admiration. She had taken no part in those fatal schemes of crooked policy, which, by seeking to seize once more that despotic power which the will of a mighty nation had torn from its grasp, lost that limited empire, and that circumscribed dominion of which it might still have held possession. But whatever were the errors of Lewis XVI. or the vices

vices of Marie Antoinette, no blame was by any party imputed to the princess Elizabeth. She had neither shared in the intrigues or the licentiousness of the court. All that was known of her in prosperity was her virtuous manners, and her charitable disposition; and in adversity, her unshaken friendship for her brother, and her piety and resignation to God. She had suffered not only the most severe extremes of calamity, but all those indignities, wants, and hardships, which could give misfortune a keener edge; for, during the tyranny of Robespierre, the forms of decency which had till then been observed were altogether disregarded. She, who had been used to the long train of attendants of the most splendid court of Europe, was compelled to perform the most menial offices herself; to dress her scanty meal, and to sweep the floor of her prison. In such circumstances, with no ray of hope to cheer the gloomy towers where she was

immured, except that hope which was fixed on a better state of existence—she probably looked upon death as her most soothing refuge, and therefore met it with tranquillity and firmness. I shall transcribe her examination at the revolutionary tribunal, not only as a proof of the calmness and dignity with which she answered the interrogatories of her barbarous judges, but also as a specimen of the manner in which the trials at this sanguinary court were conducted even before the period arrived when all enquiry, all form was laid aside.

*Trial of Madame ELIZABETH, as published  
at the Time by the Tribunal.*

*President to the Princess Elizabeth.* Where were you on the 12th, 13th, 14th of July, 1789? had you any knowledge of those conspiracies?

*Elizabeth.* I was with my family. I  
had

had no knowledge of any of those conspiracies of which you speak, and the events which then took place, I was far from either foreseeing or seconding.

*Court.* When the tyrant your brother fled to Varennes, did you not accompany him?

*Elizabeth.* Every consideration led me to follow my brother; and I made it a duty then, as I should have done on any other occasion.

*Court.* Did you not appear at the infamous and scandalous orgies of the body-guard; and did you not walk round the table with Marie Antoinette, to induce each of the guests to repeat the horrid oath which they had sworn to exterminate every patriot, in order to stifle liberty in its birth, and re-establish the tottering throne?

*Elizabeth.* Such orgies I believe never took place; but I declare that I was in no manner whatever informed of their having



happened, and never had any concern in them.

*Court.* You do not speak truth : and your denial can be of no use to you, when it is contradicted on one side by public notoriety, and on the other by the likelihood which there must be in every sensible man's opinion, that a woman so intimately connected as you were with Marie Antoinette, both by the ties of blood and those of the strictest friendship, could not but be a sharer in her machinations, and favoured them to the utmost of her power. You were therefore necessarily in league with the wife of the tyrant ; you provoked the abominable oath taken by the satellites of the court, to exterminate and annihilate liberty in its birth ; you have likewise provoked those bloody outrages done to the precious sign of liberty, the three-coloured cockade, in causing your accomplices to tread it under foot.

*Elizabeth.* I have already said that all  
these

these things were foreign to my character, I have no other answer to give.

*Court.* Where were you on the 10th August, 1792?

*Elizabeth.* I was at the palace, my usual and natural residence for some time past.

*Court.* Did not you pass the night from the 9th to the 10th of August in your brother's chamber; and did you not hold secret conferences with him, which explained to you the end or motives of all the movements and preparations which were making before your eyes?

*Elizabeth.* I passed the whole night which you mention with my brother; I never left him; he had a great deal of confidence in me; nevertheless I remarked nothing, which indicated any thing of what afterwards passed.

*Court.* Your answer is both untrue and improbable; and a woman, like you, who has shewn during the whole course of the

revolution so marked an opposition to the new order of things, cannot be believed, when she would wish to make us think that she was ignorant of the causes of the meetings of every sort which took place near the palace on the eve of the 10th of August.—Will you tell us what hindered you from going to bed on the night of the 9th of August?

*Elizabeth.* I did not go to rest, because the constituted authorities came to inform my brother of the agitation and ferment which prevailed among the inhabitants of Paris, and of the danger which might probably result from it.

*Court.* It is in vain for you to dissimble, especially after the different confessions of Capet's wife, who asserted that you had attended the orgies of the body-guard, that you had supported her amidst her fears and apprehensions on the 10th of August, for the interests and the life of Capet. But what you will not be able

of humanity, and denounce him as a counter-revolutionist. Many persons wearied of spectacles of horror put an end to their existence; and some who desired to die, but shrunk from giving themselves the stroke of death, took measures to be sent before the revolutionary tribunal, where they knew assassins were ever ready. The usual means employed for this purpose was the cry of "Vive le roi!" words which many young women who had lost their parents or their lovers on the scaffold repeated in the phrensy of despair, and found them, as they wished, a passport to the tomb. Well might the people of France have exclaimed in the words of our divine poet,

"Alas poor country, almost afraid to know itself! It cannot be called our mother, but our grave, where nothing, but who knows nothing, is once seen to smile; where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air are made, not marked; where

where violent sorrow seems a modern ecstasy: the dead man's knell is there scarce asked for whom: and good men's lives expire before the flowers in their caps, dying or ere they sicken."——MACBETH.

The beginning of the month of Prairial, a man of the name of Admiral formed the design of assassinating Robespierre and Collot d'Herbois: he failed in the attempt, was seized, and sent to the Conciergerie. A few days after Amée Cecile Renaud, a girl of nineteen years of age, whose sensibility it appears was singularly affected by the scenes which were passing before her, and whose imagination perhaps was somewhat disordered by those terrible impressions, had the courage, while an armed nation bowed before its assassins, to enter alone and unarmed the monster's den, and, as it would seem, with the intention, at the expence of life, to point out to her countrymen the tyrant under whom they groaned.

groaned. Cecile Renaud went one morning to Robespierre's house, and enquired if he was at home. She was answered in the negative; and being asked what she wanted, replied that she came to see what sort of thing was a tyrant. Upon this declaration she was instantly led to the committee of general safety, and went through a long examination. She again declared with the same simplicity, that she had only gone because she wanted to see a tyrant; and upon being searched, no offensive weapon was found upon her, and all that was contained in a little bundle which she held under her arm was a change of linen, with which she said she had provided herself, knowing she should want it in prison. The conduct of this heroic young woman furnished the tyrants with an opportunity of murder too favourable to be neglected. They instantly proclaimed that a vast plan of conspiracy against the lives  
of

of those renowned patriots Collot d'Herbois and Robespierre had been formed by traitors within the prisons, and traitors without.

The father, mother and aunt of Cecile Renaud were led with herself to the Conciergerie, where she was again interrogated, and threatened that her whole family should perish with her, if she did not confess her intention of assassinating Robespierre. She repeated what she had said at the committee; and added, that they might put her to death if they thought proper, but, if she deserved to die, it was not for any intention to assassinate, but for her anti-republican sentiments. Cecile Renaud, who was very young and handsome, was dressed with some care, and perhaps coquetry. Her appearance led her savage judges to invent a new species of question in order to bring her to confession. By their directions she was stripped of her own clothes,

clothes, and covered with squalid and disgusting rags, in which condition she was made to appear in the council-chamber and undergo a new interrogatory, where the same menaces were repeated, and where she answered as she had done before; and with great spirit rallied her judges upon the absurdity of trying to shake her purpose by a mode of punishment so contemptible. Notwithstanding no proof of any intention to assassinate Robespierre could be brought against her, she together with her whole family was put to death. Her two brothers, who were fighting the battles of the republic on the frontiers, were ordered to be conducted to Paris, that they might share her fate; but the tyrants were too impatient for blood to wait their arrival, and owing to this circumstance they escaped.

With Cecile Renaud perished not only her own family, but sixty-nine persons  
were



were brought from different parts and different prisons of Paris, who had never seen or heard of each other till they met at the Conciergerie, and were together dragged before the tribunal, and declared guilty of one common conspiracy. Their trial only lasted a sufficient length of time to call over their names; none of them were permitted to make any defence; the jury declared themselves satisfied in their souls and consciences; and the devoted victims, covered with the red cloaks worn by assassins on their way to execution, were led to death. Among those who perished on this occasion were madame Sainte Amaranthe, her daughter, who had married Monsieur Sartine the son of the ex minister, and who was now only in her nineteenth year, and one of the most beautiful women in France, and her brother, who was but seventeen years of age. A friend of mine was confined in the same prison with

with this family. A servant from the outside of the walls had made madame Sainte Amaranthe understand by signs that her son-in-law, who had been confined in another prison, had perished, and that she herself was in danger. She went immediately to her daughter, and said to her, "Your husband is no more, and it is very probable that we shall follow him to-morrow to the scaffold—No tears—this is no time for softness—we must prepare to meet with courage a fate that is inevitable." The next day passed, and no summons to the Conciergerie arrived; but on the night following at eleven o'clock a huissier entered madame Sainte Amaranthe's chamber, and told her she was wanted below. The call was well understood. "And are not we too wanted?" cried her son and daughter. "Certainly," answered the huissier. They both flew to their mother, threw their arms round her neck, and exclaimed,

ed, " We shall die together ! " The next day they perished. Fouquier Tainville, the public accuser, that monster, " horribly trick'd with blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons, bak'd and impasted with the parching streets," placed himself at a window of the Conciergerie close to the gate through which the prisoners passed, in order to ascend the carts which were to carry them to execution. There he feasted his atrocious soul with the sight of sixty-nine victims, covered with assassins' cloaks ; and observing among them some young women, particularly the lovely madame Sartine, walking towards the vehicles of death with that firmness which belongs to innocence ; " How bold those women look ! " cried Fouquier, enraged at their calmness ; " I must go and see if they shew the same effrontery on the scaffold, even if I should lose my dinner ! "

Robespierre had now attained nearly  
the

the summit of his hopes ; and his ignorance being equal to his vanity, he did not perceive that the few steps he had to climb before he could grasp at absolute dominion, must be trodden with cautious prudence ; since he had advanced so far, that, if he was now compelled to descend, it could only be by a descent which would lead to death. He had destroyed his most powerful rival Danton ; but his spies and emissaries, and above all his guilty conscience, told him that more of his colleagues must fall to give him perfect safety. He read in the countenances of the deputies, in the silent gloom with which his edicts were sanctioned, that new storms gathered over his head ; and he prepared, in conjunction with Couthon, the means of putting the lives of all those who opposed him more absolutely in his power. In the mean time he thought fit to amuse the people by a festival in honour of the Supreme Being,

whose existence he had lately proclaimed, and whose name he had dared to utter with his unhallowed lips. The plan of the festival was arranged by the celebrated painter David; he, whose mind the cultivation of the finer arts has had no power to soften; who, not satisfied with displaying on canvases those scenes of sanguinary guilt which from the horrors they excite furnish fit subjects for the pencil, has contributed to give them in his bleeding country "a local habitation and a name;" who, instead of cherishing that sacred flame of enlightened liberty which is connected with the sublimer powers of the imagination, was the lacquey of the tyrant Robespierre, and the friend of the man of blood, Marat; who, ambitious of recorded disgrace, of immortal ignominy, debased the noblest gift of heaven, genius, and employed his degraded pencil in tracing the hideous features of the monster Marat, while a  
groaning

groaning people were compelled to bow the knee before the image he had set up; and who, at the tribune of the national convention, insulted all common sense and decency by a comparison which, from its audacious absurdity, excites as much ridicule as indignation. "Cato, Aristides, Socrates, Timoleon, Fabricius, and Phocion," exclaims the panegyrist David, "ye whose venerable lives I admire, I have not lived with you—but I have known Marat!" (blessed compensation!) "I have admired him like you, and posterity will do him justice!" Yes, David, repose with your idol upon the civic crowns, the palms and laurels won by revolutionary measures, and doubt not that posterity will do ample justice both to you and Marat. Posterity will indeed be spared the task of overthrowing his altars, since they are already in the dust; and while the offences of many of our vulgar tyrants will be forgotten

with their ignoble names, David's shame will be as durable as his celebrity.

While I am upon the subject of Marat and his friend, I cannot help observing, that nothing appears more strange to us in this country than the opinions which are formed in England of the public characters of France, not by the enemies but by the friends of the French revolution. That Brissot, Guadet, Vergniaud should receive no incense of applause from those who perhaps lament that the king's castle of the Bastille was overthrown, is natural; but when we hear Mr. Sheridan speak in the house of commons of the *faction of the Gironde*, and when we read in Mr. Gilbert Wakefield's answer to Mr. Paine's pamphlet his remark upon the *Brissotine faction*, we are filled with astonishment. They might with as much propriety talk of the faction of Sidney, of Russel, and of Hampden. Such observations are blasphemies indeed

indeed from the lovers of liberty ; they who ought to pronounce with veneration the names of those illustrious martyrs, who, after the most honourable struggles for their country, shed their blood upon the scaffold in its cause, with heroism worthy of the proudest days of Greece or Rome. But though the iron sceptre of revolutionary government has restrained the groans, the lamentations, of a mourning nation for the fall of its best defenders ; and though the slavish pen of the *Moniteur*, from which Europe received French intelligence, applauded the assassins of liberty ; though Brissot, it was asserted, had filled his coffers with English gold, while his widow was languishing with an infant at her breast, with no other nourishment than bread and water, in one of the dungeons of Robespierre, and at this moment exists with three children “ steeped in poverty to the very lips ;” yet with becoming pride



disdaining to solicit support, till the memory of her husband has received, as it shortly will do, some mark of public atonement and public honour; history will do justice to his character—history will judge between Brissot and Robespierre, between the Gironde and the Mountain. History will not confound those sanguinary and ambitious men who passed along the revolutionary horizon like baneful meteors, spreading destruction in their course, with those whose talents formed a radiant constellation in the zone of freedom, and diffused benignant beams over the hemisphere till extinguished by storms and darkness.

Perhaps it will not be displeasing to you to read the following sketch of Brissot, traced by Madame Roland, who was intimately acquainted with him, and who was so admirable a judge of character.

“ Brissot came to visit us: I know nothing more pleasant than the first interview

interview of those who, though connected by correspondence, have never seen each other. We look with earnestness to see if the features of the face bear any resemblance to the physiognomy of the soul, and if the figure of the person confirms the opinion which we have formed of the mind.

“ The simplicity of Brissot’s manners, his frankness, his natural negligence, seemed to me in perfect harmony with the austerity of his principles: but I found in him a sort of lightness of mind and character which was not very consistent with the seriousness of a philosopher. This disposition always gave me uneasiness, and his enemies always took advantage of it. The more I became acquainted with him, the greater was my esteem. It is impossible for any one to unite a more perfect disinterestedness to a more ardent zeal for the public service, or feel with so perfect a forgetfulness of

his own interest a greater desire of doing good. But his writings are more fitted than his person to effect it, because they have all the authority which reason, justice and knowledge give to literary works, while his figure, from its want of dignity, inspires no respect. He is the best of human beings; a good husband, a tender father, a faithful friend, a virtuous citizen. His conversation is as mild as his character is easy. Confident even to imprudence, gay and sprightly as a youth of fifteen, he was formed to live with the wise, and to be the dupe of the wicked. As a well-informed politician, and studying during his whole life the different relations of society, and the means of procuring the greatest quantity of happiness for the human race, he was well acquainted with the nature of man, and altogether ignorant of the characters of men. He knew that vice existed, but he never could believe him to be a vicious

cious man who spoke to him with an open countenance; and when he discovered such persons he treated them as fools whom he ought to pity, without taking any precautions against them. He could not hate: his mind, though very susceptible, had not solidity enough for so vigorous a sentiment. His knowledge was so extensive, that all literary labour was to him extremely easy; and he composed a treatise with the same facility as another would copy a song: an experienced eye therefore will discern in his works, together with an excellent fund of information, the hasty touches of a rapid and sometimes a slight mind. His activity, his good humour, never refusing to join in any thing which he thought useful, have given him the air of meddling in every thing; and have subjected him to animadversions as an intriguer by those who were eager to find fault. A curious kind of intriguer in-

deed! a man who never thought of himself, or even the interest of his friends; who is as incapable as he is averse to look after his own concerns; who is no more ashamed of poverty than he is afraid of death, considering both as the usual reward of public virtues.

“I have seen him consecrating the whole of his time to the revolution, without any other motives than wishing to see the triumph of truth, and concurring in the establishment of the public good; working diligently at his Journal, which he might easily have made a good object of speculation, but contenting himself with the moderate share allowed him by his partner. His wife as modest as himself, with much prudence and great strength of mind, formed a more severe judgment of things. She had, since their marriage, continually turned her eyes towards the united states of America, as the place most suited to their taste,

taste, and their manners, and where it was easy to live with a very small income.

“ Brissot had made a voyage thither, and they were on the point of their departure when the revolution fixed him in France. As he was born at Chartres, and was the school-fellow of Pethion, who is a native of the same city, Brissot formed a still stronger attachment to him in the constituent assembly, where his knowledge and his labour were of essential service to his friend. He brought us acquainted with him, as well as with many other deputies whom former acquaintance or conformity of opinion and zeal for the public good frequently called together to converse on the subject. It was even agreed that they should assemble four hours a week in the evening at my house, because I was always at home, had good apartments, and was so conveniently situated that it was not far from any of those who composed our little circle.”

I cannot resist adding to this sketch the copy of a letter addressed by Brissot to Barrere, the day after the latter, from the tribune of the convention, had promised to satiate the people with Brissot's blood.

J. P. BRISSOT to BARRERE, *deputy  
of the convention.*

Abbey prison, 7th of September,  
2d year of the republic, one  
and indivisible.

“THE people ask you for bread; and you have promised them my blood! You thus sentence me to death before I appear at the tribunal. Thus you insult the people in supposing them to have a taste for blood, and the tribunals, which you conclude are the instruments of your passions! Alas, if my blood could furnish abundance and extinguish all divisions, I would shed it myself in an instant.

stant. In order to excuse this sanguinary phraseology, you pretend that I am forming conspiracies in prison; you pretend that I have declared, that before my head fell, many in the convention would fall.

“ This is a new calumny, invented to irritate the minds of the people against me. I defy you to cite a single witness, a single proof of this conspiracy and of this assertion. I abhor blood: I would not even demand that of my persecutors, who would willingly drink up mine. Philosophy, justice, good order, and humanity, are the true foundations of a republic. It is well known, my only crime is that I have opposed all other means of establishing it. This is the conspiracy which I still continue to practise in my prison. Yes, I am in conspiracy with my triple bars, and my triple bolts. I am in conspiracy alone, or with the philosophers of antiquity  
who



who teach me how to support my misfortunes, for the sake of liberty, of which I have ever been an apostle. This is the plot which shall be added to the list of those already imputed to me, and of which you seek in vain the evidence, since it is all imaginary. But you wish for victims ! Strike then, and may I be the last republican sacrificed to the spirit of party !”

But let us leave the martyrs of liberty, and return to the polluted festival instituted by a tyrant. David, ever ready to fulfil the mandates of his master Robespierre, steps forth, marshals the procession, and, like the herald in Othello, “orders every man to put himself into triumph.”

At this spot, by David’s command, the mothers are to embrace their daughters—at that, the fathers are to clasp their sons—here, the old are to bless the young, and there, the young are to kneel to the old—upon this boulevard the people are

to sing—upon that, they must dance—  
at noon they must listen in silence, and  
at sun-set they must rend the air with  
acclamations.

Ah, what was then become of those civic festivals which hailed the first glories of the revolution ! What was become of that sublime federation of an assembled nation which had nobly shaken off its ignominious fetters, and exulted in its new-born freedom ! What was become of those moments when no emotions were pre-ordained, no feelings measured out, no acclamations decreed ; but when every bosom beat high with admiration, when every heart throbbed with enthusiastic transport, when every eye melted into tears, and the vault of heaven resounded the bursts of unpremeditated applause !

But let us not even now despair of the cause of liberty. Let us not abandon a fair and noble region filled with objects which excite the thrill of tenderness or the  
glow

glow of admiration, because along the path which France has chosen serpents have lurked beneath the buds of roses, and beasts of prey have issued from the lofty woods : let us discover, if we can, a less tremendous road, but let us not renounce the land of promise.

The citizens of Paris had been invited, and the invitation amounted to a command, to decorate their houses in honour of the festival. Accordingly Paris on that morning, lighted up by brilliant sunshine, presented the most gay and charming spectacle imaginable. Woods had been robbed of their shade, and gardens to the extent of some leagues rifled of their sweets, in order to adorn the city. The walls of every house were covered with luxuriant wreaths of oak and laurel, blended with flowers ; civic crowns were interwoven with national ribbands ; three-coloured flags waved over every portal ; and the whole was arranged with that light and airy grace which belongs

belongs to Parisian fancy. The women wore garlands of fresh-blown roses in their hair, and held branches of palm or laurel in their hands: the men placed oaken boughs in their hats, and children strewed the way with violets and myrtle. The representatives of the people had large three-coloured plumes in their hats, national scarfs thrown across their shoulders, and nosegays of blended wheat-ears, fruits, and flowers in their hands, as symbols of their mission.

From this profusion of gay objects, which in happier moments would have excited delightful sensations, the drooping soul now turned distasteful. The scent of carnage seemed mingled with these lavish sweets; the glowing festoons appeared tinged with blood; and in the back ground of this festive scenery the guillotine arose before the disturbed imagination. I thought of that passage in Mr. Burke's book, " In the groves of  
*their*

*their* academy, at the end of every vista I see the gallows !” Ah Liberty ! best friend of mankind, why have sanguinary monsters profaned thy name, and fulfilled this gloomy prediction !——

A great amphitheatre was raised in the garden of the Thuilleries immediately before the palace, now the seat of the convention. Upon a tribune in the centre of the theatre, Robespierre as president of the convention appeared; and having for a few hours disencumbered the square of the revolution of the guillotine, this high-priest of Molock, within view of that very spot where his daily sacrifice of human victims was offered up, covered with their blood, invoked the Parent of universal nature, talked of the charms of virtue, and breathed the hope of immortality. When the foul fiend had finished this impious mockery, he descended from the tribune, and walked with great solemnity towards a grotesque

tesque kind of monument that was raised upon the basin in the front of the palace, which had been covered over for that purpose. On this monument was placed a misshapen and hideous figure, with ass's ears, which for some hours served as an enigma to the gazing crowd, who knew not how to account for this singular appearance; till Robespierre having set fire to this image of deformity, which was declared to be the symbol of atheism, its cumbrous drapery suddenly vanished, and a fair and majestic form was discovered, emblematical of wisdom and philosophy.

Atheism being thus happily destroyed, the convention, attended by a numerous procession of people, and preceded by triumphal cars and banners, marched to the Champ de Mars, where with much toil and cost a rocky mountain had been reared, upon whose lofty summit the tyrant and his attendants climbed, and  
from

from whence he once more harangued the people; and the festival closed with hymns and choral songs in honour of the Supreme Being.

Robespierre on this day, intoxicated with his power, lost sight of his usual prudence, and displayed all the littleness of his vanity. He caused a line of separation to be made between himself and the other deputies of the convention, and marched at some distance before them, like a captain at the head of his band. He had the folly to display his importance by keeping the convention and the assembled multitude waiting, and the ceremony suspended for two hours, while he was sought for in vain. During the procession his creatures attempted to raise the cry of "Vive Robespierre!" but it was faintly re-echoed by the spectators, many of whom followed him with "curses, not loud but deep, which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not."

Two

Two days after this festival in honour of the Supreme Being, Robespierre, the scourge of his creatures, compelled the enslaved convention to pass a law, which permitted the revolutionary jury to condemn those who were brought before them, from their own internal conviction, without any proof whatever, or hearing any witnesses; and which also suppressed the superfluous office of official defender, or counsel; a privilege that Couthon, who made the report in the name of the committee of public safety, asserted conspirators by no means deserved \*. In other words, the jury were now authorised to pass sentence without even the forms of a trial. From this period, till the fall

\* Amidst the definitions of aristocracy, when the law passed against suspected people, Couthon ingeniously observed, that any good citizen was authorised to arrest every man in the street as an aristocrate, who held his head too much up or too much down, and also all those who looked on one side, instead of looking you in the face.

of



of Robespierre, all the judicial solemnities of the revolutionary tribunal consisted in reading over the names of the accused, who were immediately after declared by the jury to be guilty of a conspiracy against the safety of the French people, and the indivisibility of the French republic.

If any of the unhappy persons thus proscribed attempted to speak in their defence, they were thus silenced by the president: "Tu n'a pas la parole \*;" and if they persisted in declaring their innocence, they were put what was called "hors de débats;" that is, ordered immediately out of the court, condemned in their absence, and sent to execution. "I was not in prison when this conspiracy took place," cried the viscountess de Noailles, madame de la Fayette's sister. "But you would have been in the conspiracy if you *had* been there," answered

\* "It is not your turn to speak."

the president ; and this unfortunate lady, the mother of three children, perished with her own mother and grandmother. Madame de la Fayette being in another prison was, in the hurry of forming the lists of death, forgotten when her family suffered—and still lives. From this period the prisons became the scenes of unexampled horror and despair. Till now, the crowds by which they were inhabited had submitted to their fate with that cheerful resignation, and often with that careless gaiety which is buoyant at a Frenchman's heart in circumstances that would altogether overwhelm the sinking spirits of the people of other countries. The houses allotted for the prisons of the suspected persons were for the most part hotels of emigrants, which were placed in the most agreeable situations of Paris, with extensive gardens, and commanding beautiful views of the country. Such habitations had nothing  
of

of that gloom and darkness which we usually associate with the idea of a prison, and they were peopled with the best society of Paris.

The ladies were attentive to the duties of the toilette, the gentlemen were polite and assiduous, and the court-yard of the Luxembourg, the convent of St. Lazare, and some other prisons, exhibited of an evening almost as much brilliancy and gaiety as the Tuilleries or the Champs Elisées. Music and literature had their amateurs. At the Luxembourg, select circles were formed to hear lectures from men of letters, sometimes on chemistry, sometimes on astronomy. At St. Lazare, ladies sent invitations to dinner from the corridor of Frimaire to the corridor of Floreal, with the same formalities as formerly from their respective hotels. Sometimes cards, sometimes bout-rimés, charades, and epigrams beguiled the evening of its length,

length, and thus the days of captivity rolled on \*. They were indeed embittered by one hour of mournful melancholy, and one of trembling terror : the first when the evening paper arrived, and the list of the victims of the revolutionary tribunal was read over, among whom the prisoners seldom failed to find some friend or acquaintance to lament. But this was a sensation of gentle sadness, compared to that turbulent dismay excited by the hoarse voice of the turnkey sounding at midnight through the long galleries the knell of some devoted victim, who was called upon to rise, in

\* The maisons d'arrêt were now so multiplied that almost every street of Paris had its prison, and in some of the smaller hotels the revolutionary laws were less rigorously observed than in those which contained a great number of prisoners. Instead of giving a sketch myself of one of these milder abodes of captivity, I shall translate a letter written to me on that subject by M. Maron, the protestant minister at Paris.

order to be led to the Conciergerie by gendarmes sent for that purpose from the revolutionary tribunal. Still, however, amidst the tears which the prisoners shed over their lost companions, many of them cherished the fond hope that they themselves should escape. But the law of the 22d of Prairial tore away every illusion of the imagination or the heart, and displayed the general proscription of the prisoners in all its extent of horror. It was no longer a solitary individual who was called to death; multitudes were summoned at once. Every returning night, long covered carts drawn by four horses entered successively the courtyards of the different prisons. Whenever the trampling of the horses' feet was heard, the prisoners prepared themselves for their doom. The names of the victims marked for execution the following day were called over, and they were instantly hurried into these gloomy hearths.

The husband was scarcely allowed time to bid his wife a last farewell, or the mother to recommend her orphan children to the compassion of such of the prisoners as might survive the general calamity. At the prison of the Luxembourg, an hundred and sixty-nine victims were in one night torn from their beds, and led to the grated dungeons of the Conciergerie, that prison over the gates of which might with equal propriety have been written, the same as over that of the infernal region of Dante, “ *\*Lasciate speranza voi ch’entrate;*” for here it might literally be said, “ *hope never came, that comes to all,*” I have seen the Conciergerie, that abode of horror, that anti-chamber of the tomb. I have seen those infectious cells, where the prisoners breathed contagion, where the walls are in some places stained with the blood of the massacres of September, and where a part of the spacious court-

“ Let him lose all hope who enters here.”

F 2

yard;

yard, round which the grated dungeons are built, remains unpaved since that period, when the stones were taken up for the purpose of burying the dead. I have seen the chamber, where the persons condemned by the revolutionary tribunal submitted to the preparatory offices of the executioner; where his scissars cut off the lavish tresses of the youthful beauty, and where he tied her tender hands behind her waist with cords. Merciful Heaven! and among those who have thus suffered were persons to whom my heart was bound by the ties of friendship and affection.—But though I have survived such scenes, they have left upon my heart that settled melancholy which never can be dissipated.—For me, the world has lost its illusive colouring; its fairy spells, its light enchantments have vanished; and death, the idea most familiar to my imagination, appears to my wearied spirit the only point of rest.

The usual pretext for those murders

*in mass*, which were practised at this period, was that of a conspiracy in the prisons; a vague and wide term which the tyrants might interpret at their pleasure, and which gave them the power of including whatever persons and whatever numbers they thought proper. Spies were placed in every prison, who, after making out their lists of proscription as they were directed by the tyrants, declared that a conspiracy existed, of which those marked on the lists were the authors, or accomplices. Persons who had never seen or heard of each other till that moment, were often brought together from different prisons to take their trial for the same conspiracy: and when the decemvirs wished to get rid of any particular individual, he was without any hesitation added to what was called the *fournée*, the *batch*; for such was the appellation given to the crowds dragged together to the guillotine, and with such terms of jocular familiarity was



mourning humanity insulted. Sometimes the persons accused only received their act of accusation as they were led up to the tribunal. Sometimes in the hurry, confusion, and carelessness with which these indictments were made out, one person was mistaken for another. The duchess of Biron, among other instances, went to the tribunal with an act of accusation which was destined for her steward. The indifference of the tribunal with respect to such errors, enabled mons. Loiferolles, at sixty years of age, to deceive his barbarous judges, by dying for his son, a youth in his twenty-first year. It was observed, that this generous parent, who thus a second time gave life to his child, answered with uncommon alacrity when his name was called upon, and went with a look of exultation to the scaffold. Perhaps history does not offer a more affecting instance of parental tenderness, making the voluntary sacrifice of life to

save

save the object of its affection. But this extraordinary epocha called forth the lights and shades of the human character in all their strongest colouring. The last excesses of ferocious crimes were contrasted by the sublime enthusiasm of the virtuous affections, shedding their sweetnesss like solitary flowers over the wilderness where serpents hiss, and beasts of the forest howl; and by the noblest efforts of heroical philanthropy bidding us cease to despair of humanity, and converting the throb of indignant horror into the glow of sympathetic admiration;—bidding us turn from the tribunal of blood, from Robespierre and his jury of assassins, to Loiserolles dying for his child; to madame Berenger, led in the bloom of life to execution with her parents, and, altogether forgetful of herself, seeking only to support the sinking spirits of her mother;—to madame Bouquet, the sister-in-law of Guadet, scorning the impious

laws which punished humanity with death, affording shelter to her proscribed friends, and dying with them on the scaffold for having done so.

Among the multitudes who perished at this period, all were not armed with the same fortitude; and sometimes even when tyranny spared the life of its victim, its cruel persecutions bereaved the sufferer of reason. Of this mademoiselle ——— was a melancholy instance. This unfortunate young lady saw her father, her mother, and several of her relations dragged to the scaffold: she alone was spared, and remained a prisoner at the Conciergerie. Along the gloomy vaults of that terrific prison, by the dim light of sickly lamps, she fancied she saw the mangled spectres of her murdered parents, and in a short time became entirely bereft of reason. She obstinately refused all sustenance, and remained motionless as a statue, holding to her bosom her parrot, whom

whom she had insisted on bringing with her to her dungeon. When conjured by the other prisoners to take some nourishment, she only answered, “\* Je n’ai besoin de rien.” “But your parrot,” said they, “your poor parrot is hungry.” “Non,” she constantly replied, “non, il n’a besoin de rien—Mon paroquet est comme moi—il n’a besoin de rien.” The tyrant has fallen, and the dungeon of this unfortunate young lady is thrown open—but alas! for her, redress and freedom have come too late—her reason is gone for ever!

The Polish princess Lubomirska united with superior talents all the charms of early youth and distinguished beauty. She had been travelling through different countries of Europe; and two years since was compelled to leave Berne in Switzerland, on account of the attachment she

\* “I want nothing.—No, he wants nothing.—My parrot is like me, he wants nothing.”

had avowed to the cause of the French revolution. She came with her husband to Paris, and cultivated the society and friendship of Vergniaud and of other deputies of the convention, who were the most eminent for their talents and their zeal for liberty. This democratic princess, to whom a true republican would have offered a *civic* crown, became an object of resentment to the vindictive Robespierre, on account of her friendship for some members of the Gironde: she was thrown into prison, from thence sent to the revolutionary tribunal, and condemned by the jury of assassins to die. Being in a state of pregnancy, her execution was deferred. In the mean time her friends gave information of her danger to Kosciusko, the Polish general, and desired his interposition in her behalf. Kosciusko instantly dispatched a letter to Robespierre, declaring that the princess Lubomirska had ever shewn the most devoted attachment

to

to the principles of liberty, and conjuring Robespierre to spare the life of a zealous friend to the common cause in which France and Poland were engaged. Robespierre, after reading the letter, exclaimed, “ \* Quoi ! grace pour une princesse !—Ah, Kosciuszko !—qu’on la guillotine.” The unhappy princess, having miscarried, was immediately sent to execution.—Two days before the fall of Robespierre, eight women who had been respited having declared themselves pregnant, were dragged to the scaffold. Among this number was the princess of Monaco. As she passed along the court of the prison, she said to the prisoners who were assembled to see the sad procession, and bid a last farewell to the companions of their misfortunes, “ I go to death with the calmness which innocence inspires, and wish you from my soul a better fate.” Then ad-

\* “ What ! pardon for a princess !—Ah, Kosciuszko !—let her be guillotined.”

dressing herself to one of the turnkeys who was leading her towards the chamber where the executioner waited to bind the victims, " I have one favour to ask you," said she, taking a packet from her bosom, " will you promise to grant it? This packet contains my hair: I implore your compassion, I conjure you in my own name, in the name of all who hear me, send it to my son, to whom it is directed; swear to me in the presence of those virtuous persons, whom the same destiny as mine awaits, that you will render me this last service which I require of humanity." The dismay and terror of one of her women who was involved in the proscription, formed a striking contrast to the firmness she herself displayed. " Take courage, my dear friend," cried the princess, " take courage, it is the guilty only who ought to fear."—The prison of Port Libre offered an affecting spectacle of filial piety. Madame

Lacha-

Lachabeauffiere, in consequence of a malignant denunciation made against her by her son-in-law, was not only dragged to prison, but placed in a dungeon in close confinement till the moment arrived when she was to appear before the tribunal. Her daughter, madame Maleffi, who was already confined in another prison, procured leave to be transferred to that where her mother was immured, whom by tears, and supplications she obtained permission to see. Madame Lachabeauffiere was taken out of her dungeon, and led to her daughter, who flew towards her, and, throwing her arms round her neck, remained a long time pressing her mother to her bosom, and without power to articulate a word. After this melancholy interview, madame Lachabeauffiere was led back to her dungeon. Her situation affected her daughter so deeply that she became bereft of her reason. Sometimes she took up her needle-work for a few



few moments, then throwing it aside, rose with precipitation, and flew along the galleries of the prison till she reached her mother's cell. She usually seated herself at the door, and listened attentively: when she could hear nothing, she used to weep bitterly, and repeat again and again in a tone of despair, "Oh, my mother! Oh, my tender, my unfortunate mother!" She often remained many hours together, seated upon the stone-floor, and she was in a state of pregnancy. Her hair hung dishevelled over her shoulders, her eye seemed bent on vacancy, her cheeks were sometimes flushed with deep red, and sometimes of a deadly paleness, and she was often seized with convulsive faintings. Every day she carried the greatest portion of her food to her mother, who without this succour would have often wanted sufficient nourishment for her support. It is soothing to add, that madame Lachabeaußiere was snatched from death by

By the fall of the tyrant, and that her tender and virtuous daughter is restored to reason.

While the tyrants, far from finding any satiety of blood in their daily murders, were erecting new ranges of seats in the hall of the revolutionary tribunal, sufficient to contain an hundred instead of fifty accused persons, death now hovered in a new form over the prisons. The administrators of the police went to each prison attended by a strong guard, and ordered the prisoners to be shut up in their respective chambers, and not suffered to have any communication till the purpose of the visit was effected. They then went successively to every apartment, and demanded of the prisoners their knives, scissars, razors, buckles, watches, and all the money they had in their possession. These unhappy persons, being altogether ignorant of the object of the visit, had no time to conceal any thing, and

and were stripped of all they had except fifty livres in paper, which each prisoner was suffered to retain in order to pay for his subsistence. But from this day famine scowled along these gloomy mansions, adding to the pangs of mental sufferings those of debility and disease. The prisoners were no longer permitted to receive their daily meals from their own houses, or from a tavern; but were ordered from henceforth, in conformity to the laws of equality, to eat à la gamelle\*. Their food was provided for them at the rate of fifty sous a day, by a cook placed in the prison. Their nourishment consisted of one meal in twenty-four hours, often too scanty to satisfy the calls of hunger, and sometimes composed of such nauseous diet as the greater part of the prisoners were unable to eat.

\* Out of one dish at a common table.

Age and infirmity were denied every indulgence necessary to support the disordered frame, or raise the sinking spirits. A little bread faved from this wretched meal, and water, was all that could be obtained during the rest of the day \*. To this meal the prisoners at the Luxembourg, where nine hundred persons were confined, were summoned in a succession of three hundred at a time, by a great bell, which called them to a hall, at the door of which stood the jailor, who had been an executioner under Collot d'Her-

\* Even the prisoners of war were compelled to submit to this rigorous treatment. General O'Hara has since told me, that after having avoided the gabelle for some weeks on the plea of illness, he was at length forced to share the common evil. His friends in England will be glad to hear that he is now released from his lodgings in a prison, and from a gendarme when he walks out, and is gone on his parole to Chantilly.

bois

bois at Lyons\*. This man was remarkably tall, big, and muscular; his arms were bare to the elbow; he wore a fierce red cap, which had now become the symbol of blood, and looked as if he were prepared for a massacre. He only suffered twenty persons at a time to enter the hall, and then flinging the door in the faces of the others, obliged them to remain in the passages till those within were seated at the table. The hour of dinner passed like the other hours of the day, in gloomy and unbroken silence; for even the soothing intercourse of conversation was now forbidden, under the penalty of being dragged immediately before the tribunal, since the spies placed in the prisons, whenever they observed two or

\* The keeper of the prison at the time we were in confinement, Benoit, distinguished in Paris by the epithet of the bon Benoit, had long before this period been turned out of office, being unfit to execute the purposes of his masters.

three persons talking together, inquired sternly if they were forming a conspiracy. What most occupied the minds of the prisoners at this period was contriving the means of escaping from their tyrants by a voluntary death, which was now become difficult, since they had been stripped of every instrument which could have served that purpose. Such was the situation of these unhappy victims of tyranny, when on the night of the 9th of Thermidor the tocsin sounded, and the city was called to arms. Many circumstances which I shall afterwards relate, led the prisoners to believe that these sounds were the signal of a general massacre. But the tocsin now rung the joyful, the triumphant peal of liberty. Before I give you a detail of the scenes which passed on the 9th of Thermidor, I must trace the political events which led to that memorable epocha, and rescue France from a state which was the astonishment

tonishment and shame of human nature ; from a state more terrible than all which the most cunning tyrant could have inflicted upon slaves whom he had previously disarmed. And all this was suffered by a nation which called itself free, which had taken up arms to assert its freedom, and gained the most glorious victories in its defence. France, covered with all the laurels of heroic valour, and the terror of combined Europe, held out her neck to vulgar assassins and executioners, instead of crumbling them into dust.—Such are the strange contradictions of human nature ! The effects resulting from the terrible impulse of revolutionary government upon the moral world, may perhaps be compared to those produced upon the natural scene by the tremendous tempests which sometimes sweep along the western islands ; when the mingled elements rush forth in irresistible fury, when the deluging waters

ters

ters bear away vegetation, trees, and rocks, and the shrieking whirlwinds shake the dwellings of man to their foundations.—The storm is past—the enormous vapours have rolled away—a soft light hovers on the horizon, and we are now left at leisure to sigh over the ruins that surround us, and lament the victims laid prostrate by the blast. But let us hope that this stormy revolution will at least produce some portion of felicity to succeeding generations, who have not, like us, felt the tumultuous horrors of this convulsion of the passions, who will owe their happiness to the struggles of a race that is passed away, and whom they have never known; while we, who have been spectators of the cruel conflict—we, who have lost the friends we loved and honoured, are often unable, amidst the tears we shed over their tombs, to consider “all partial evil as universal good.”



To Miss HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

Paris, 15th Ventose,  
3d year of the French republic.

“ VOUS \*, qui des bords de la Tamise  
Délaisant les brouillards épais,  
Au milieu du peuple français  
Cherchâtes la terre promise ;  
Vous qui carressâtes long-tems  
Cette illusion délectable,  
Comme s’amusent les enfans  
Des rêves brillans de la fable ;  
Vous, que les guichets, les verroux  
Ont achevé de mieux instruire ;  
Mais qui voyez des jours plus doux  
Enfin à l’horison reluire ;  
Aimable élève d’Apollon,  
Qui, sur le sommet du Parnasse,  
Près des Pope, et des Addison,  
A déjà fixé votre place :

\* M. Maron, when he addresses me in verse, uses  
a style of compliment which would have led me to  
omit

You ask me, madam, to give you a sketch of the maison d'arrêt, where, under the tyranny of Robespierre, I found myself shut up on a *suspicion* of being *suspected*; and like your countryman Howard, active in your researches, you wish to add my little recital to your history of our revolutionary dungeons. I obey your orders, for

Peut-on rien refuser aux Graces,  
Quand la Vertu, quand la Raison,  
Inséparables de leurs traces,  
Par vos accens, commandent en leur nom ?—

I cannot however promise you any very interesting detail: the hotel Talaru, converted into a maison d'arrêt of the section Lepelletier, has been the scene of no very

omit the poetry, if it did not belong to the history of the letter. Besides, fiction is the privilege of poets, and the French language is still that of gallantry, although the days of French chivalry are gone for ever.

remark-

remarkable events. It never was reckoned in the number of those fatal dépôts which were called the antichambers of the guillotine. But it is probable that it would have had its turn also. There is even room to believe that it would not have been long delayed, if the ninth of Thermidor had not, for our good fortune, deranged certain *antibropophagical* measures announced by Barrere in the sitting of the convention previous to that day. But I am anticipating facts; and as I have to write a journal, and not an epic poem, I shall keep within chronological order.

Though my residence in Paris does not exceed twelve years, I have witnessed the building of the hotel Talaru, in the rue Richelieu, now rue de la Loi, near the national library, by the marquis of that name; who was first maître-d'hôtel to the queen. Considerably reduced in his fortune by the new order of things,  
the

the citizen Talaru took last year the resolution of leaving his hotel, and of withdrawing into the adjoining house, which also belonged to him, and which was called the little hotel Talaru. He let the great hotel to one Gencé, a tavern-keeper, who intended to make it a furnished hotel. Gencé, on reflection, thought that it was not probable that any considerable number of foreigners would come to Paris under the present circumstances, or that the citizens of the departments would now find Paris a very pleasant abode; and fearful that he had made a bad speculation, he was anxious to rid himself of the affair. We had now reached that disastrous period when maisons d'arrêt sprang up in every quarter; when every section in Paris had its exclusive prisons at the service of its revolutionary committee; and Gencé proposed the hotel Talaru to the revolutionary committee of the section Lepelletier,

to be applied to this patriotic purpose. His proposal was accepted, and the agreement made; but I have never learnt what were the conditions. A German porter was put into this new prison, and the mine became worth the digging.

In reality, all whom their evil destiny led hither were made to pay for their lodging a most exorbitant price. Such was in a short time the fate of Talaru himself. He expressed a wish, on account of his age and infirmities, to have a room to himself; and he obtained this special favour at the rate of 18 livres a day, that is, paying almost as much for his small apartment as he himself was paid for the whole house.

I was the eighth person who was lodged in a beautiful saloon on the ground floor towards the garden. We each paid four livres a day. This saloon therefore brought in three hundred livres a decade, nine hundred and sixty livres a month,

ten

ten thousand two hundred and fifty livres a year ; and the whole hotel was let by the proprietor for seven thousand livres. What became of this exorbitant rent, and among whom were the spoils divided, as I have never been in the secret, I can give no information on that head.

On the 10th of Thermidor we were about two hundred prisoners.

If any person complained of these extortions, he was answered, " Citizen, you are at liberty to leave this place, and if you like you may be transferred elsewhere." But the fear of being thrown into some one of those houses which were premature graves, made us bear with resignation the ills we had.

It was on the 19th of Prairial that I exchanged my own modest apartment for the fine saloon in question. The order of the committee of public safety by which I was arrested, did not express in what prison I should be confined. I

asked therefore the agent of the committee, who was the bearer of the warrant, conjointly with two members of the revolutionary committee of my own section, if I might be allowed to choose my prison? He answered courteously, that he did not wish for any thing more than to oblige me.

De m'obliger ! l'aimable politesse !

Je demandai le *Luxembourg*.

Il me fut fait ce refus net et court :

Citoyen, je ne peux, car on s'y trouve en presse.

Les *Carmes*, citoyens ?—Hélas ! c'est même cas.

*Picpus* ? C'est encor pis, ainsi qu'à *Saint Lazare*.

Enfin, pour sortir d'embarras,

Je pensai demander d'aller droit au Ténare.

Happily things did not proceed to this extremity. I referred myself to the knowledge and kind offices of my courteous agent, and he carried me to the hotel Talaru. I found on my entrance an  
order

order of things altogether different from what I had expected. I thought that all the maisons d'arrêt were at this period equally guarded, and treated with the same rigour, and prepared myself for solitary confinement and the *gamelle*. But I found the communication among the prisoners perfectly free: they visited each other without any impediment, and even the communication without was attended with very little difficulty. I saw some receive their wives and children, others their friends and mistresses. Persons of both sexes met together; every one amused himself as he thought proper, and fared as he liked. If it was not the image of *liberty*, it was at least that of *equality* and *fraternity*; and I said to myself, "Well! if we must build our tabernacles here, so let it be!" How many persons whom I knew were much more to be pitied than myself! The art of contentment is to look not at what is



better, but what is worse than our own situation.

Here then, for the third time since the institution of the republic, was I deprived de la cléf des champs; "of the key of the fields."—I have perhaps more merit than many others in loving the republic, which has cost me more personal vexations than I had ever dreamt of suffering.

The very day of its proclamation (21st September 1792, O. S.) I was arrested at Seves, for twenty-four hours, from having met the municipality and the military force of the place, at the house of one of my friends whom they were come to take to prison, and who was then gone to Paris to confound the calumny of his persecutors before the committee of general safety. The first anniversary of this same day, twenty fusileers took me from my bed at five in the morning, and I was lodged

lodged in the horrible chambre d'arrêt of the mayoralty-house\*. But I must own that this last time the prospect was a little more alarming on account of the progress of tyranny, which since the establishment of revolutionary government stalked on with giant steps, and knew no bounds. I acknowledge at the same time to have felt that the perspective of evil, when it is clothed with a certain degree of probability, is often worse than the evil itself.

The daily spectacle of the misery of so many good men whom I esteemed or loved; the image which was ever before my mind of those honourable veterans

\* We were stowed up in that place to the number of one hundred and two. This room was much more dreadful before an honest Swiss, Louis Major, established a kind of corporation under the name of *the society of perfect equality*. This regulation made the dwelling more supportable: I had the honour of being president twice twenty-four hours.

in patriotism whose heads had been placed under the fatal axe; the audacious insolence of the wicked in every popular assembly, which was equalled only by their folly, and by the abject stupor of the people of the higher classes, whose name was now become a title of proscription\*, embittered my existence more than

\* Had the historian Sallust been a witness of this horrid system, and undertaken to draw sketches of it, he might have found an exact description in a picture he has himself given, to which it bears the most perfect resemblance.

“ In primo capere pessimum quemque et omnibus invisum necare: ea populus lætari et merito dicere fieri. Post, ubi paulatim licentia crevit, juxta bonos et malos lubricinose interficere; cæteros metu terrere. Ita civitas, servitute oppressa, stultæ lætitiæ graves pœnas dedit—uti quisque domum aut villam, postremò aut vas aut vestimentum alicujus concupiverat, dabat operam ut in proscriptorum numero esset. Homines incertissimi, quorum omnis vis virtusque in lingua sita est, forte atque alterius socordia dominationem oblatam insolentes agitant.

than the rigours of imprisonment; tempered, I allow, by a great number of unhopèd-for comforts, and by a stoical tranquillity of which I did not think myself

tant. Quæ pessimi et stultissimi decreverunt, ea bonis et sapientibus facienda. Mollitia decretorum *senatui* dignitatem, *Lepido* metum detrahi." Salust. in Bello Catil. et passim in Fragmentis.

"They first began by putting to death the nobility and clergy; and as the people felt no sympathy with the aristocracy or the church, they discovered great marks of satisfaction at their proscription. But when the tyranny became by degrees so confirmed that all classes were indiscriminately murdered, and every one shrunk with fear, the city suffered for its silly joy, by oppression and horrors of every kind—so that whoever coveted the house or villa, or even the plate and dresses, of any person used his endeavours to get him put into the list of proscription. Men of doubtful character, whose whole courage and virtue lay in their tongues, taking advantage of the stupidity or indolence of the rest, assumed absolute power, and behaved themselves with unexampled insolence. Whatever these profligate and weak men decreed, the wise and

myself capable. Society was become to my feelings the Cape of Storms, my prison was the Cape of Good Hope.

My first regrets were bestowed on the festival of the following day ; that which was celebrated in honour of the Supreme Being. My absence from this national solemnity gave me pain. Notwithstanding all that has been said of the decree of the convention expressing the adhesion of the French nation to the immutable principles of all morality and all worship, I cannot help observing that this decree is one of those proposed by Robespierre which I disapproved the least. Atrocious disturbers of social order, by carrying to their utmost length the most impious abominations, had thrown on republican France a general odium. Jus-

the good were obliged to sanction ; and the *convention*, terrified into submission by the *committee of public safety*, lost all its dignity, and sunk into registers of its imperial edicts."

tice

tice had overtaken these persons ; but the coalesced powers were not less careful to take advantage of this delirium, and discredit the cause of liberty with their own people; by treating as *atheists*, that is to say, as universal *disorganizers*, its partisans and friends. The national representation was willing to give an authentic and formal denial to this calumny; and it is true that in this point of view the decree had a good effect. The convention never entertained the absurd idea of decreeing that God existed, that the soul was immortal, and that the French ought to believe this because such was the good pleasure of the legislature. It meant, by a declaration of a kind as new as the circumstances were in which it was placed, to absolve and exculpate a great nation from those calumnious imputations seized on by its enemies to serve their views; and I repeat it, all the friends of principle have applauded the decree, and I con-

felt that I was enthusiastic in its favour.

It was for its object, and not the mode of celebrating the festival of the 20th of Prairial, that I regretted my absence from it. The mode I had judged before hand would be a series of pantomimes and *barlequinades*; and during a long walk I had taken in the country a few days before, I had lamented the devastation made in the woods, and in particular among the young trees around Paris; a devastation which extended over the whole surface of the republic, and of which our sons as well as ourselves will feel the sad effects.

I composed, two or three days after my arrest, the following couplets, in which I attempted to describe my moral situation, and which I sent to a few friends to comfort them on this point. They are set to the air of the "vaudeville de la Soirée orageuse," which the  
affecting

affecting adieux of Montjourdin to his wife and his friends have so much contributed to make the fashion.

## I.

Si de riches appartemens,  
Si le luxe de la dorure,  
Des glaces, des tableaux charmans,  
Pouvoient adoucir ma clôtüre ;  
A mes regrets, à mon ennui  
Je devrois imposer silence :  
Mais envain j'y cherche un appui  
Propre à soutenir ma constance.

## II.

O précieuse liberté !  
Première passion du sage,  
De ta paisible volupté  
Rien, hélas ! ne nous dédommage.  
Nous ne respirons que pour toi,  
Ta soif jour et nuit nous tourmente :  
En nous soumettant à la loi  
Toi seule encore es notre attente !

## III.

Dernier asyle du malheur,  
Espérance consolatrice,  
De ton baume restaurateur  
Prête-moi le secours propice !



Qu'il tremble, l'ami des tyrans,  
 Prêt à leur vendre sa patrie.  
 La vertu venge ses enfans.  
 Des forfaits de la calomnie.

## IV.

Oui, par toi je dois triompher  
 D'une malveillance perfide !  
 Et que pourrois je redouter,  
 Vertu ! couvert de ton égide ?  
 Quand la paix regne dans mon sein,  
 Que mon front en offre l'empreinte !  
 Il ne peut être que serein,  
 Alors que le cœur est sans crainte..

In this manner I accommodated myself every day more and more to my new dwelling, and every day the good company increased by new arrivals.

But by degrees the police of the house became more severe, and we were successively deprived of little comforts which we much regretted.

First of all the communication with our friends, so far as receiving their visits in our room, entirely ceased. It

was

was soon a particular favour to talk with any one for a few minutes at the door of the prison. Soon after, the entrance of the news-papers was forbidden, and this prohibition was not one of those things which affected us the least. It was common enough, however, to have a news-paper smuggled in, and then it was privately handed about, and sought after with anxious curiosity, for we never failed learning the death of some acquaintance or friend; but we were informed also of the success of our armies; and their victories sometimes compensated for our individual pains and sufferings.

A short time had elapsed, when in the chamber where I lodged we had a precious resource for intelligence. The first secretary of the liquidation office, the citizen Dutilleul, was one of our fellow-prisoners. He was so necessary in his office, that the director-general DeNormandie was authorised to *put him in requisition* every

every time he stood in need of him, and this happened almost every day. At seven o'clock Dutilleul was sent for at the maison d'arrêt, and conducted by a gendarme to his office, where he passed the whole day at work; and the grateful republic put him under lock and key every evening. Judge how well he was questioned on his entrance; and it happened pretty often, that *through inadvertence* he had left the "journal of debates and decrees" at the bottom of his pocket. In the meanwhile we killed the present time, and shut our eyes on the future, by play and bodily exercises; such as battledore and shuttlecock, and fives: we feasted, read, and made *bout-rimés*. I frequently partook of the two last amusements with a very amiable young man named R - - - - - n, and we had a Muse, who daily amused herself in setting up some prize, which my antagonist, I own, generally obtained. Till  
then

then we had neither of us had any idea of our talent for poetical composition\*.

Et

\* I was one day employed in the exercise of a talent of another kind than that of making *bout-rimés*, and which I also acquired in prison, and that was washing the dishes; when the boy who made our beds, being alone at that moment with me, looked at me at first with an embarrassed air, and then stared with astonishment while he asked me half a dozen successive questions. "Pray, sir, are you a protestant?" "Yes." "Did you know any person of Nîmes?" "Yes." "Rabaut St. Etienne?" "Yes."—His eyes glistened—"Are you a minister, sir?" "Yes." "Of the Dutch embassy formerly?" "Yes." "And now at St. Thomas de Louvre?" "Yes."—The boy burst into tears—"Good God! sir, is it possible that it can be you?—What! you here! I can scarcely believe my own eyes."—And then wiping away his tears, he told me who he was, and talked to me of Nîmes, and my respectable friend Paul Rabaut, and his unfortunate brother Rabaut St. Etienne. "No, no, sir," added he, "you shall wash no more dishes; I will take care of that, and I beg pardon for not having known you sooner." I thanked the good lad, and informed my companions of his offers. He rendered

Et voilà du malheur l'utilité palpable !

Il developpe en nous le germe du talent.

*Rameau* dit de *Labord* : " Hélas ! c'est bien le diable :

" Que le fort à ce drôle ait prodigué l'argent !

" Il nous effaçoit tous, si, loin de l'opulence,

" Son génie eût connu l'aiguillon de la faim."

Amis, du bien, du mal, admirons la balance :

Ils concourent ensemble à la meilleure fin.

What made me think in this place of Rameau and Laborde is, that this last, not the rival of Plutus but of Orpheus, was also our companion in misfortune, and that I shall have soon to inform you of his fatal catastrophe. As to our poetical sports, I shall communicate some of them, my dear madam, at the end of this letter. Even the charade, the logogryphe, and the acrostic furnished us with amusement.

rendered each of us the same service, which was worth fifteen livres to him a decade ; and I was afterwards indebted to him for many little acts of kindness.

L'ennuyeux

L'ennuyeux loisir du couvent  
 Parmi les moines les fit naître  
 En dépit du bon goût ; le même sentiment  
 En prison les fit reparaître.

Thus passed away the long days of Prairial and Messidor; Thermidor came. Till this time we had been soothed with the consoling idea, that the hotel Talaru was only a depôt of prisoners detained as a measure of general safety, and not of those who were termed suspected; and that there was little apprehension of any thing more than captivity. The fourth of this month robbed us of this assurance. Three of our companions were taken from us the preceding evening; Talaru, the proprietor of the house; Boutin, former treasurer of the navy, known by his beautiful English garden, which he called Tivoli\*; and Laborde, former valet-de-chambre

\* The *French Virgil* has consecrated these verses to him :

“ Tel que ce frais bouton,  
 Timide avant-coureur de la belle saison,  
 L'aimable

chambre to Lewis XV. celebrated for his passionate taste for the arts, and in particular for that of music, in which he had been a great composer, and of which he had also written the history. The day after their removal was the last of their existence; and their heads fell with forty-three others under the pretended axe of the law.

An event of this nature darkened a little the colour of our ideas, from the sad presage which it offered, especially to prisoners of a certain *caste*.

Quand de l'être au néant le passage est si bref,  
On se tâte par fois si le trône tient au chef.

Fallen from the hopes which the

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L'aimable Tivoli, d'une forme nouvelle

Fit le premier en France entrevoir le modele."

DE LILLE, Poeme des-Jardins, ch. 1.

He celebrates two verses afterwards the garden of the *Desert*, which had been laid out with so much taste by another of our companions in misfortune at the hotel Talaru, M. Demonville.

greater

greater part of my fellow-prisoners had indulged of a speedy release, their gaiety and good humour were changed into looks of melancholy and sorrow. They were astonished and sometimes impatient at my unshaken philosophy. The house now overflowed with waggon-loads of prisoners, who were brought up from the departments: the guard became more strict, and the rigours and pains of our captivity more severe. About this time I composed two couplets to the tune of the Marseillois hymn :

## I.

Chers camarades d'infortune,  
Compagnons de captivité,  
De notre disgrâce commune  
Consolons-nous par l'amitié :  
De tous les revers de la vie  
Elle tempere la rigueur,  
Le bon droit vengera l'honneur  
Des efforts de la calomnie.

Courage, ô mes amis ! bravons les coups du fort !  
Vertu ! (bis) c'est avec toi qu'on méprise la mort.

## II.



## II.

Retranché dans sa conscience,  
 Le républicain généreux  
 Doit bientôt de son innocence  
 Voir briller le jour radieux.  
 Equitable moins que sévère,  
 La patrie, au gré des tyrans,  
 Auroit-elle pour ses enfans  
 Cessé de vouloir être mère ?

Courage, ô mes amis ! bravons les coups du fort !  
 Vertu ! (bis) c'est avec toi qu'on méprise la mort.

I had no doubt but that this system of blood was drawing near its end \* ; but who was sure of living to see it ? None of us dared believe that it was so near. The eighth of Thermidor no paper could pass the portal, and Du-

\* I thought with Sallust : " Ego cuncta imperia crudelia magis acerba quam diuturna arbitror, neque quemquam a multis metuendum esse, quin ad eum ex multis formido recedat." In *Fragm.*

" The reign of violence is more cruel than lasting ; and no one becomes an object of terror to the multitude, without feeling that the multitude is an object of terror to himself."

tilleul

tilleul had not been sent for to his office. He went however the ninth. How long he seemed to us in returning ! He came at last ; but his return was accompanied by circumstances that appeared extraordinary. The keeper, holding him by the arm, hurried him across the court, where we were walking, and waiting to see him ; and led him up to his room, without permitting him to stop. When we joined him, we found his lips completely closed with respect to what was passing, to which effect he had received express orders. We were all shut up two hours sooner than usual, and enjoined to go to bed. But one of us, who had gone down into the court-yard for a moment between nine and ten o'clock, heard a \* news-man cry distinctly in the streets,

\* For some days past the news-men had been enjoined not to cry their papers near the hotel.

This

streets, "La grande arrestation de Catiline-Robespierre et de ses complices \* !" He told us of this circumstance; and you may well imagine what an effect such a piece of information produced on our minds. We knew at least to what we ought to attribute the beat to arms, and the retreat which we heard some time after. We slept but little, and the next morning early we were informed of the whole. All then was ecstasy: the countenances of the prisoners were scarcely to be recognised. As my dejection had not been very great, my joy on this happy occasion was less immoderate.

This man had been ordered by the sentinel to march on, and hold his tongue. He answered, swearing a great oath, "There are a number of unfortunate persons within; and they ought to know what is passing." I was informed of this precious anecdote the next day.

\* "The wonderful arrest of Catiline-Robespierre and his accomplices!"

The same day I made this impromptu epitaph on Robespierre :

Ci-git un monstre abreuvé de forfaits ;  
Tigre altéré de sang tyrant, suant le crime :  
Caligula, Neron, Phalaris, traits pour traits.  
La foudre, hélas ! trop tard l'a plongé dans l'abîme.

On the 10th and the 11th, prisoners of a pretty opposite description made their appearance.

On the 12th I was set at liberty. I was the first in the house who was thus indebted to the change of system, and one of those who least expected it \*. I did not

\* On the examination of my papers, which was done by two members of the revolutionary committee of my section, without myself being present, or any one on my behalf ; a letter was found, I was told, from the *mother of God* † : I was of course her accomplice, and it

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† Catherine Theos was a fanatic who indulged in all the airy and fanciful dreams of Swedenborg, and, like other fanatics, had a certain number of followers. This

not want much entreaty to go out ; and I visited my penates, my friends, and my books, with a pleasure which the experience only of the unfortunate can estimate.

it was expected that I should be tried with her. The very day after the fall of Robespierre, *Vadier*, that veteran in virtue, brought to the recollection of the public this vast conspiracy, and informed the convention that he had a report ready, which would unfold all its mysterious horrors. I said to myself, " So many innocent people perished as accomplices of L'Amiral, why should I not perish as the accomplice of Catherine Theos ? " What comforted me was the absurdity of this accusation, to which none of my friends, nor any person who had the least acquaintance with me, could give credit. It seemed curious enough to ascend the fatal cart, and get to the next world with the votaries of the sybil of the rue Contrescarpe.

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poor woman was arrested as a counter-revolutionist, the tyrants of the day calling every thing they did not comprehend, counter-revolutionary. She had the address to flatter Robespierre ; probably gave him some claim to relationship ; and Robespierre protected her secretly from the fangs of *Vadier*, who was very earnest in making war on those citizens of Heaven, and bringing them to the guillotine.

Before

Before I finish my history, I should do justice to the keepers, to whose care I was entrusted for fifty-three days. They were not equally praise-worthy, but, taking one with the other, they were not much amiss; and the agreeable aspect of a bottle of wine or an assignat humanised them completely.

I shall characterise Smydth by a single trait. While the greater part of the jailors were followed by ferocious mastiffs, his usual companion was a sheep [a sheep with four legs \*] which never quitted him, and which made him look more like St. John than St. Roch.

Ainsi de mes arrêts se termine l'histoire :

O siècles à venir, daignerez-vous y croire !

\* Every person in Paris knows who the *two-legged sheep* were, and their abominable employment in the prisons under the tyranny of *Robespierre*. Very different from the

—placidum pecus, inque tuendos

Natum homines.

P. S. A singular anecdote I cannot help relating.

Rouffelin, one of my fellow-prisoners at the hotel Talaru, had been carried before the revolutionary tribunal, and acquitted. He came the next day to visit his old companions, and impart to us the good news. He informed me on this occasion, that a Dutchman called Van Hooft had been dragged to the guillotine at the moment when he (Rouffelin) entered the Conciergerie, and that he lay down on the bed yet warm of this unfortunate man, who had just left it. Van Hooft was my friend; and his unhappy catastrophe affected me extremely. I was so much the more strongly persuaded of the death of Van Hooft, as it was announced in several of the public papers: and you may imagine without much difficulty what was my astonishment, when, a fortnight or three weeks after, I received a letter from Van Hooft, in  
which

which he congratulated me on the justice which had been done me, and begged me to use my interest to procure him his liberty. I hastened to the prison of Pleffis to see him, where he had been just transferred. He cleared up the mystery of his resurrection, by informing me that the cannibals had guillotined, from a mistake in the name, a poor Brabanter, who was called Van Hove, instead of himself. Not having had it in his power to repair this error till it was too late, he had taken advantage of it, and acted the dead man till farther orders.



## LETTER V.

THE surrender of Lyons, which took place some days previous to the murder of the deputies of the Gironde, contributed to hasten the execution of that atrocious deed. The Lyonnais had long struggled against the commissaries of the mountain faction, who, under the pretence of an ardent zeal for liberty, were diligent in seeking opportunities for riot and plunder; and however strongly this detachment of conspirators were supported by those who directed their motions from Paris, they could not withstand the indignation and vengeance of the citizens of Lyons, who, roused by the dangers with which they were threatened, crushed their oppressors, the chief of whom, Chabrier, they sent to the scaffold. The Lyonnais had

had proceeded too far to hope for any mercy from the faction, who had now accomplished their treason at Paris: and seeing the cause of liberty abandoned by the departments, who had made their peace with the traitors, they were driven either to suffer patiently the weight of their wrath, or prepare to oppose it. Of this dreadful alternative they chose the latter; but finding themselves unsupported in the project they had at first formed of marching to Paris, they determined to defend their own city. In the mean time they employed the most honourable means to explain to the convention, that their resistance arose neither from disaffection to the republic, nor from any wish to form a federal government, of which they had been accused; that they had sworn fidelity to the republican constitution, and had issued orders to assemble the primary assemblies for its acceptance. But resistance for any cause

was now a crime, and this concession of the Lyonnais only served to increase the insolence of their oppressors, who decreed that the city was in a state of rebellion, and that all who had resorted thither from the neighbouring departments should be treated as emigrants : for the conspirators easily perceived that this city might form a central point of opposition, by collecting together all those persons in the southern provinces who were averse to the revolutionary order of things. An army was immediately levied, and ordered to march against Lyons ; and it was believed that when the Lyonnais were informed that the affair was about to become so serious, they would make no farther opposition.

The general who commanded the conventional army, endeavoured by proclamations to conciliate the parties, but in vain. His proposals of pardon were rejected by those who thought themselves injured,  
and

and who knew by fatal experience what degree of confidence was to be placed in the offer of tender mercies from the cruel. The Lyonnais were allowed three hours to deliberate on the gracious propositions of the general, but a discharge of cannon returned their answer before the first had expired ; and though new proclamations were issued, and on the anniversary of the 10th of August both parties sent deputations to celebrate that event together, the Lyonnais continued their warlike opposition, and prepared to make an obstinate resistance.

In the mean time the department of Mont-Blanc, formerly Savoy, was recovered by the Piedmontese, who took advantage of the absence of the army which had been called off for the purpose of reducing Lyons ; and the representatives who conducted the operations of the siege wrote to the convention to repeal the decree which the conspirators in their wrath

had poured out against that city. The Lyonnais were as deaf to these concessions as they had been to the proclamations of the generals, who now proceeded to extremities, and began the bombardment of the city, which was set on fire in several places, and a great number of the inhabitants perished. Other proclamations followed this act of hostility, which met with the same reception. The black flag continued floating on the towers, indicating resistance till death; and though the city, being unfortified, had nothing to defend it but the bravery of its inhabitants, no impression could be made except by bombardment. The conspirators therefore sent their emissaries into the adjoining departments to raise the people *in mass*; and, if any credit is to be given to the reports of those who were employed, the besieging army was re-inforced by other armies amounting to fifty thousand men. With this re-inforcement the attack began.

gan afresh, the city was surrounded, all communication cut off, and the convention was informed that famine would soon effect what the obstinacy of the Lyonnais had hitherto prevented. During three months these brave republicans contended against the numerous armies that the conspirators had assembled; and had not their ardour been checked by their commanders, they would all have witnessed against the cowardice and baseness of their countrymen, by whom they were left unsupported, with the last drop of their blood. After having performed prodigies of valour, till they were overpowered by numbers, and resistance became no longer possible, they endeavoured to effect their retreat, by forcing their way through the besiegers; for according to the dispatches sent to the convention they were entirely surrounded. In this retreat some succeeded; but a great part were cut to pieces, and the con-

ventional army entered the city in triumph.

With the savage, joy of the famished cannibal, when he seizes on some shipwrecked wretch whom the waves have unkindly spared from the fate of his companions, the mountain conspirators heard of the reduction of Lyons. The committee of public safety, through the organ of Barrere, in congratulating the convention on the news, informed them that measures were taken to exterminate every fugitive; that no weakness, no mercy should be shewn; and that this den of conspirators must make ample reparation, and that this reparation must consist in burying this rebel city under its own ruins. And lest this moment of wrath should be transient, lest the indignation which had filled their capacious souls should evaporate, these guardians of the public weal methodized their vengeance by a decree, which the convention sanctioned,

tioned, that Lyons should be razed to the ground, and struck out of the cities of the republic. This "great and vigorous measure, the total destruction of the city, was the only one that had escaped us," the deputies, in mission at this devoted place echo to their colleagues of the committee. They had already created military tribunals to judge the inhabitants, but complete extermination had not been within the reach of their comprehension: and lest this example of vengeance should be lost to the world by some misplaced hesitation, by some sentiment of weak humanity, the committee dispatched one of its own members to direct and superintend the execution.

What had hitherto passed was scarcely the beginning of horrors. Collot d'Herbois, a comedian, who had been driven from the stage for his professional incapacity, but who had acted a considerable part in the conspiracy, was gone thither

to



to give tragedy some original strokes. "Alas," says the eloquent reporter on the correspondence of Robespierre and the extent of his enormities, "the terrible instrument of death, erected only for the punishment of crimes, springs up like poisonous plants over every part of the republic. It becomes naturalised under the opposite skies of the north and the south: the frozen bear and the devouring dog-star alike mourn over its fatal successes.

"O! come; let us penetrate together, my fellow-citizens, across those fiery torrents, under those ruined walls which seem crumbling down to threaten us with ruin; let us pass into those cities heretofore filled with people, now widowed of their inhabitants; into those new deserts more frightful than those of Paran or Horeb. See them, like the hyena growling fiercely over its prey!—Do you not perceive them like destroying demons rushing

rushing with their devouring torches over every monument of genius or of art? These new Gengis, who have conquered neither Persia, nor Egypt, nor Lybia, are anxious to make Frenchmen of the 18th century a race of barbarians, reduced not to the practice, but to the simple reading of the rights of man, as the Saracens were heretofore instructed in the knowledge of the Koran.

“ Look for a moment with us, on these vile dilapidations of the treasures of Ptolemy Philadelphus; observe those evil principles, those Arimanes, who have been disputing with each other for twelve months past the palpitating limbs of our dismembered country! What were they, and what are they now, those founders of committees of demolition, those creators of ruins?—Vile slaves, trembling in the presence of the mighty.

“ It is the conspiracy of folly and of crimes united against genius and virtue.

It

It is the insurrection of robbery against the precept of *mine* and *thine*. It is the reign of private vengeance and the most abject passions.

“ O Lyons ! city celebrated for thy commerce, who is this new Gengis \*, who, with the axe and the thunder in his hand, pours down on thy walls, and rushes on to avenge the injuries of Themugin ? It is finished, and thy ruin is sworn ! ”

It is unnecessary to ask of the unfortunate inhabitants, as I have sometimes done, the history of their woes—their tyrants blazon themselves their crimes to the open day, and invite you to read the black catalogue of their enormities. “ In destroying a rebel city,” says Collot, “ we shall

\* Gengis, unknown and despised under the name of Themugin, returned as a conqueror to avenge the insults which he had received. Collot, who knew professionally the parts which the Tartar had played, is accused of having taken him for a model; and of having avenged, like him, private injuries.

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consolidate the rest. We must leave nothing but ashes. We demolish with cannon balls, and with explosions like those of mines." When such were his principles, his projects, and his exploits, it would be trifling to stop to talk of individual distresses—to relate how he ordered three ladies, who had thrown themselves at his feet to implore his mercy, to be tied for six hours, to the scaffold where their husbands were to be executed; or to speak of the execution of a young heroine, who had shewn prodigies of valour during the siege. These were only interludes in this great tragedy, one of whose languishing actors in his existing correspondence writes, that since the guillotine has been at work, his health has been established; that every thing goes well, and is expected to go better; "since it is found," continues he, "that the guillotine is not sufficiently expeditious, and in a few days three or four hundred will be dispatched  
at

at a time; and the houses are fast demolishing."

This was no empty menace—the tragedian executed what this savage had promised.—“The guillotine and fusillade do not go amiss,” says he; “sixty, eighty, two hundred at once are shot, and every day care is taken to arrest a sufficient number, so as not to leave the prisons empty.” But still these were ordinary means. This new Salomoneus was not contented with the insignia of the god, he panted to imitate his destroying power; and accordingly some of the miserable inhabitants were placed before batteries of cannon; and while they were shattered and torn in pieces by the artillery, though the greater part were left to be dispatched the following day by the spades of those who came to bury them, Collot amused himself in beholding the operation.

During this waste of life, that of the property of the unfortunate victims was  
not

not more respected. "It costs four hundred thousand livres each decade for *démolitions*," writes one of these demons, who talks of re-colonizing the country. "More heads every day, more heads are falling. What ecstasies thou wouldst have felt," adds the monster to his correspondent, "if thou hadst seen this national justice executed on two hundred and nine rascals! What cement for the republic! We have knocked off five hundred; and when we have dispatched twice as many, which we shall do, things will go forward."

Where then, it might be asked, was the convention, while these horrors were executing? Where? Alas! this convention, sent by a free people to consolidate their liberty, was in chains. Had it been less enslaved, the decree, that Lyons should no longer exist, would have justified the executioners.—Collot was not willing that this decree of devastation should remain  
a figure

a figure of rhetoric—he says so: “The revolutionary army arrives the day after to-morrow, and then,” continues he, “I shall be able to perform great things. These conspirators must soon be dispatched—Lyons must exist no longer—and the inscription thou hast proposed,” for this letter is addressed to Robespierre, “contains a great truth, for hitherto the decree has been but an *hypothesis*. It will be your business to make it what it ought to be, and we will prepare the amendments before hand.”

This was the private correspondence of the monster with Robespierre. But let us not conceal his language to the convention itself. “We are hardened,” says he, “against the tears of repentance—Indulgence is a dangerous weakness—The demolitions are too slow—We must employ means more adapted to republican impatience. The explosion of the mine, the devouring activity of the flame alone can express

express the omnipotence of the people : its will cannot be impeded like that of tyrants ; it ought to have the effect of thunder." And what answer does the convention return to its colleague ?—The wretch for a whole year after retained a seat in the assembly.—It was the plan of Collot to banish those whom he did not destroy ; for he found it difficult to carry his purpose into full execution ; and after having murdered a part, and exiled the rest, he discovered that he had fulfilled his commission, and should be able on his return to say with truth, that Lyons existed no longer.

" What ideas ! what fury !" exclaims the reporter : " it seems as if the moral world was fallen back into chaos. And these are legislators ! Alas ! if the Erebus of the antients had had its legislation also, it would undoubtedly have been more consistent and more humane."

We are at first tempted to believe, in  
passing



passing in review these ferocious characters, that all the monsters of the desert had quitted their dens to rush in on our cities; or rather, to adopt more natural ideas, we cannot help discovering the end of these horrible levellers, which was the destruction of commerce, and the establishment not of an equality of happiness, but of an equality of misery, throughout the republic.

It will scarcely be thought possible, yet it is very generally believed, that Collet was led to this vengeance on the people of Lyons for having hissed him when he acted on their stage. Thousands of victims have atoned for the insult offered to a wretched comedian; and this great city, which from the time of Augustus had been the centre of the commerce of Gaul, where he lavished his favours, and for three ages received the tribute of gratitude in the honours that were rendered him, had now fallen under the stroke of the

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the most vulgar of tyrants. Had these monsters looked for precedents for their cruelties, they might have found them in their prototype Caligula, for in this very city that tyrant once resided : and the resemblance of Caligula and Collot is so far striking, that they both exercised their despotism over the same class of citizens; though the motives of Caligula appear to have been more natural than those of Collot, and his cruelty more discriminate.

While this tragic ruffian was acting his part at Lyons, others with principles as atrocious, though they were less steeped in blood, were carrying desolation into other parts of France. Bourdeaux, which had been raising itself to the height of the revolution, was now a prey to the caprice of a young monster who had not yet counted twenty years, and who was the valet of Robespierre in the commission of crimes. The republican patriots  
having

having long since fallen under the proscription, Julien's instructions and plan seem to have been the establishment of *sanseculotism* over the aristocracies of commerce, of *muscadinism*, and of wealth. His correspondence is as silly as it is atrocious, and of its atrocity we may judge when he condemns the measures of blood already taken as being moderate and almost counter-revolutionary. It appears that he was one of the first who had denounced the enormities of Carrier; but ages of punishment or repentance will not atone for the murder of Salles and Guadet, who were executed at Bourdeaux during Julien's administration; together with Guadet's father, mother, sister and her husband, the husband's brother, and one of his aunts; in short, the whole family, excepting Guadet's wife, whose murder was delayed till she recovered from a severe indisposition, which happily lasted till the tyrants fell.

## LETTER VI.

**N**O class of men were more interested in the preservation of the abuses of the ancient government than the priests. When the constituent assembly lessened the influence of the higher clergy, by stripping the church of its domains, and making the salaries of its ministers more equal, the national wealth was not only increased, but the great mass of the priesthood were satisfied with the distribution. The majority of those who had hitherto directed the machine of the revolution were fully persuaded that the priesthood shared but little in its spirit; and, knowing that whatever does not keep pace with its career, retards its progress, had sought at different times to dissolve the

alliance of the church and state altogether. They felt indeed that the article in the declaration of rights, which says "that no one shall be disturbed in his religious opinions," must be eventually subversive of the established religion; since whoever believed it to be not only unnecessary and expensive, but hostile to the great principles of liberty, would murmur at contributing to its support.

A considerable part of the clergy refused to accede to the civil constitution which the constituent assembly had formed, alleging that in matters of religion, or in the regulations of the church, no one ought to guide their faith, or receive their obedience, but the personage who, in constant succession from the great author of christianity, had held the delegated power. This class had by their non-conformity lost their employment, but they were not the less cherished on that account by those who thought  
with

with themselves, that man was made for the sabbath, and not the sabbath for man. The zeal of these non-jurors for the faith which they contended was once delivered to the saints, was too ardent to suffer this humiliation of the church in silence ; nor was the vigilance of the friends of the revolution less awake to counteract their efforts. The majesty of the church, of which they believed themselves to be the only true supporters, would not permit them to bow before the majesty of the people ; and when the legislative assembly undertook to be the interpreters of the law, and enacted decrees for the banishment of the unconstitutional clergy, they sought refuge in the majesty of the throne, the cherished ally hitherto of the church, whose power was at this time scarcely more confirmed than its own.

The protection given by the court to the non-juring clergy hastened the ruin

of both \*. The king refused at first to sanction the decree of the legislative assembly, who however at length prevailed: and when the royal power was annihilated, which happened not long after, the priests were compelled to seek asylums of charity, in foreign countries, of those whose ancestors had fled from the bloody persecutions of their order, but whose injuries the sons had forgotten; or if still remembered, they perhaps answered as Guise did to Poltrot, "If your religion enjoins you to murder, ours compels us to forgive."

The disposition of the national convention was still more unfavourable than that of the legislative assembly to the

\* Of the secret history of that eventful period which overthrew both the monarchy and the church in France, madame Roland has left us many curious particulars. The principal actors are now no more, except Servan and Dumourier—all the rest having perished on the scaffold. See Appendix, No. III.  
civil

civil establishment of the clergy. The truth is, that the enlightened part of the country had considered religion as a personal thing. Those who believed, of which the number was not very great, thought the protection of the state no addition to its dignity; and those who disbelieved, or, which was the same, confounded the doctrines of christianity and the established church, thought that its alliance was not only burdensome, but pernicious. The great divisions of the contending parties for the government gave the priesthood respite. But no sooner was this question decided, and the reign of Robespierre established, than the men of reason, as they called themselves, renewed the attack against the men of the church, who were unable to make any farther resistance.

The constitutional clergy had no protection but that which was given them by the constitution now proscribed, and



had inspired no interest in the devotees, who considered them rather as apostates from religion, than defenders of the faith; and treacherous guides in the road of salvation, on account of their compliance with the law.

A strict adherence to the ceremonies and doctrines of the Romish church was not the only superstition that darkened France. There was another of a more terrible nature, and more destructive of social order, which was atheism. Voltaire has observed, that a reasoning atheist is a greater scourge to mankind, than the most sanguinary fanatic. The commune of Paris had assumed this character; and, having twice contributed to overturn the civil government of the country in the space of a few months, imagined that the kingdom of the next world was to be taken by force as well as the kingdom of the present. This formidable project was conceived, and brought

brought to maturity in modest silence. The good people of Paris, who had troubled themselves but little about religion, but who imagined that there might be something good in it, as there is in the worst of vocations, were extremely surprised to see the archbishop of Paris, with his clergy, present themselves at the bar of the convention, attended by the constituted powers of the department and the municipality, "to be regenerated;" that is, to abjure their former belief, and make their new confession of faith, in which they declared that there was no other duty than liberty, no other gospel than the republican constitution, and no other worship than equality. This illumination was not the result of the deep studies either of the archbishop or his vicars. The secret was imparted to him by Chaumette, the procureur of the commune, to whom it was discovered by one Cloutz, commonly called Ana-

charsis, a Prussian by birth, and an atheist by profession, whose history I have already related. Clootz had written a book, which he told the convention on presenting it was the fruit of fifteen hours labour every day during the course of four years. He also instructed them that this work, singular in its method and curious in its detail, overturned at one stroke all sects, antient or modern, of natural or revealed religion. —Of this work, which “proved the nothingness of all religion,” the convention decreed the acceptance, and honourable mention; and, thus armed, Anacharsis set out on his travels to convert the world to atheism. There was something masterly in his first attempt; and had he been satisfied with the conversion of the archbishop and the commune, whom he brought to the bar of the convention, he might have enjoyed his triumph in security; but when he attempt-  
ed

ed to profelyte the convention itself, Robespierre opposed the invader with his doctrine of the Supreme Being, and Anacharsis was sent to the prison of the Luxembourg. There a friend of mine found him in daily controversy with Thomas Paine, who had just written "The Age of Reason," for his credulity in still indulging so many religious and political prejudices. Soon after, this vain enthusiast was sent by his polemic antagonist Robespierre to the guillotine, where many of his converts in succession followed him, and among his pupils was the archbishop.

Many of the bishops and priests who were deputies in the assembly, and some of the ministers of the protestant faith, animated by the example of the archbishop, made their public recantation. Of this last sect one observed that, though his system of faith inculcated, more than any other, moral obligations, yet, as the

great day of judgment was arrived, the reign of reason, the triumph of philosophy, he must divest himself of his sacerdotal character, and become regenerated also, since, as he confessed, "tous les prêtres dans tous les cultes ont toujours un peu de charlatanisme \*."

The ingenuousness in the members of one profession provoked the same candour in those of another. The priests having confessed that there was a little quackery in their administration of the next world, the physicians crowded to the bar of the commune, to acknowledge that they had been "un peu prêtres" also, and that a little spice of mountebank dealing entered into their administration of this. Admitting that nature and reason were the best remedies, they made offerings of their diplomas by which they had been

\* All priests of all religions have a little spice of the mountebank.

authorised to cure *secundum artem*, in direct contradiction to both; and this virtuous dereliction of their former practice was rewarded with applauses and civic insertion.

Reformation, as well as terror, was the order of the day: the searching eye of the commune left nothing unexplored. To the epuration of the priests and physicians succeeded that of the comedians, who had no professional sins to confess, since they had acted their parts on the stage of the world without any disguise. However, the commune thought that those who had been in the habitude of personating princes, and nobles, and queens, and countesses, could little relish habits of equality, and therefore sent to prison both actors and actresses as suspected.

The spirit of reform did not stop at the consecration of the spoils of the church to the services of the state. It

seized on those privileges which in all countries, and under every establishment of religion, have been accorded with the common consent of mankind, and on the exercise of which much of the order and happiness of the world has been thought to depend. On our entrance into the world it is the priest who confers on us our moral existence; in riper days it is he who hallows our affections; and without his dismissal we have been taught to think that our road to heaven was not altogether secure. Of the two first of these functions, the legislative assembly had taken possession—the fathers brought their children to be regenerated at the municipal font, and the lover led his blushing mistress before the altar of Hymen, and received her from the hand of the civil officer, who pronounced their union “in the name of the law.” The care of disposing of the citizens at death yet remained to the church, and the funerals

nerals continued to darken the way in long processions, till the commune seized on this last prerogative of the clergy, and decreed, that gay revolutionary colours of the nation should take place of the funereal pall — the priests should be changed into municipal officers, and the cemetery should be called the place of repose, where, instead of the hope of being troubled with a resurrection, the citizen should have the privilege of sleeping for ever.

The church of Notre Dame was changed into the temple of Reason; and the commune, with the divinity herself, attended by a splendid train, came to request the convention to sanctify with their presence the consecration. The Goddess of Reason was a fine blooming damsel of the opera-house, and acted her part in this comedy also to the entire satisfaction of her new votaries. From her imperial throne, in which she was  
 o borne



borne by four porters, she descended to the right hand of the president of the convention, and by a decree received the fraternal kifs, as soon as the procureur of the commune, who attended as high priest, or master of the ceremonies, had announced her negative and positive character; "first, that she was not, like the objects of the ancient worship, a cold and inanimate image; and next, that she was a masterpiece of nature; and that her sacred form had so enflamed every heart, that only one universal cry was heard, "No more priests, and no other gods!"

When the deputies arrived at the temple, the Goddess of Reason introduced them to the Goddess of Liberty, who came out of the house of Philosophy, to receive their homage, and bestow her benediction. The enemies of the revolution encouraged these follies, which the patriot disavowed and lamented: and the philosopher would only have smiled at these

these transient puerilities, had they not been mixed with atrocity and crimes. Alas! the respect for Reason was as fleeting as the respect for other strange gods; for her altars were soon deserted, and her high priests, and the divinity herself, were soon after conducted amidst the applauses of the people to the guillotine. Immediately after the regeneration of the metropolitan, those who felt the same conviction of its necessity made confession of their sins, and applied for the conventional blessing. This conviction nevertheless was far from being general in either profession; for though the constitutional clergy were attached to the cause of liberty, and rejoiced in the regeneration of their country, they did not imagine that the belief of reward in a future state would make a less virtuous citizen of the present. This counter-revolutionary obstinacy was held in great indignation. Though the commune had

called on Reason, like the priests of Baal, "from morning until noon," the votaries at her shrine were few and solitary, and it became necessary for the honour of the goddess, that more revolutionary measures should be pursued. Accordingly, attended by the committees of the sections, and the popular societies of Paris, the municipality appeared a second time at the bar of the convention, where, after a philippic against the unre-canting clergy, they demanded the suppression of their salaries, and that those who believed in "the tales of augurs should pay them." The convention, who probably had as little faith in augurs as the commune, had however more charity, and deferred the sentence of famine, which the municipality had decreed. The commune, though it did not succeed in the attack on the priesthood, was more successful in its attacks on the church. The word of order was  
issued,

issued, and the streets of Paris were filled with mock religious processions. The most ludicrous masquerades presented themselves in every quarter; pioneers and artillery-men led the march, clothed in the surplices of the inferior clergy; the national guard were arrayed in the habits of the priests; the revolutionary citizens of the section were vested in garments still more costly; the revolutionary ladies and the priestesses of Reason had sanctified themselves with the dresses belonging to the Virgin, and St. Frances and St. Bridget; and the revolutionary committee had reserved for their own decoration, with great prudence, all the garments of fine gold, embroidery and jewels, while the caps of the priests and the mitres were placed on the heads of the horses employed in dragging these weighty spoils, which were to be presented to the convention. These offerings consisted of  
crosses.

crosses, suns, vases, chandeliers, and chases, apostles and saints in gold and silver, St. Anthony and his pig, St. Roche and his dog, and all the other saints registered in the calendar who were found to be of the same metallic worth. From the convention, after undergoing the sentence of condemnation for aristocratical and counter-revolutionary principles, they were sent to be regenerated at the mint, and make expiation for the long series of impositions they had been practising on the world, by becoming, under a new form, the protectors of liberty and the republic.

The wooden saints, who in moral and religious estimation were equal, and oftentimes superior, in paradisaical rank to their brethren, though their consideration in these moments of irreligious phrensy was infinitely less, were committed, without remorse, to the flames at the place of execution.

execution. And into the same unhallowed fire were thrown those inestimable treasures which had been for ages the consolation of the suffering believer, and the refuge of the faithful and pious. Amid the sacrilegious pile lay three eyes of the evangelists; a blue jacket, bedaubed with paint, taken from the wardrobe of St. Luke; a piece of ragged tent cloth, that had been purchased from the warehouse of St. Paul, and his cloak, which had been left with Carpus; a few of the coats and garments of St. Dorcas, which the weeping widows had shewn to St. Peter; all which, with other relics still more precious, such as some of the moveables belonging to the holy Virgin, with parts of her apparel; the spoon and pap-dish of the holy child; the head of some renowned saint of St. Genevieve's acquaintance; the bones of the patroness of Paris herself, with her linen, and other property found in her chapel,

chapel \*, of which age had obliterated the knowledge, with arms, legs, toes, and little fingers of illustrious martyrs, became the prey of revolutionary flames, kindled with bundles of the real wood of the cross.

But these civic sacrifices were not confined to the worshippers of the established system; the sectaries also burnt with the same patriotic zeal; the followers of Moses and of Calvin applauded these votive

\* This holy ark had been regarded with religious awe, as the palladium of Paris, and a security for the protection of St. Genevieve. It had been estimated at millions: but whatever might have been its worth in former times, it was now considerably diminished, since the precious stones with which it was ornamented had been displaced by other stones of little value. The figures engraved on this sacred utensil were singular enough for a saint. On one side was Mutius Scævola, in the heroic act of putting his hand into the flames, with Constantine the Great, and Jupiter and Hebe; while Venus and Cupids were sporting on the other. The saint had surely paid little attention to the outside of the dwelling.

offerings

offerings of their catholic brethren. They beheld with secret satisfaction the downfall of a power, of which they had been for ages the victims, while they deposited the precious ornaments and utensils of their own worship, but without complimenting the state with the abjuration of their religious belief. In this madness against superstition some method was observed. Almost every monument that bore the marks of genius, every relic that could contribute to the progress of the arts, was preserved with care, and deposited in places of safety. Many a saint owes his rescue from destruction to the chisel of the sculptor or the painter's skill; and except in a few of the departments, nothing was destroyed that was worth preserving.

The great depository at St. Denis nevertheless suffered from this reforming rage. The crowns of Dagobert and Clovis; the sceptres of Philip the beautiful, and  
Henry



Henry the fowler; the silver helmet and golden spurs of Charlemagne; and the rich variety of treasure arising from the munificence of sovereigns to the tutelary saint of France, were mingled together in the crucible of the mint. The bodies of these monarchs and heroes were not treated with equal respect; for, as the edict had gone forth against every vestige of royalty, and every mark or remnant of aristocracy, the tombs in which they had been for ages quietly inurned were forced to open their ponderous jaws; and those furious Jacobins, worse than "the hellish rout that tore the Thracian bard in Rhodope," had the satisfaction to see the bones and ashes of the long line of their Charles's, Henries, and Louis; of their Condés, Montmorencies, and Turennes, before whose lowest valets they would have trembled in submissive silence, become the prey of famished dogs, and the sport of the winds.

One

One of the pretences for this violation of the dead, which was general around Paris, and in some of the neighbouring departments, was the want of the coffins that enclosed them to make bullets for the use of the army. The cemeteries were therefore called the revolutionary lead-mines. If the ramblings of imagination might be indulged amidst the horror which this sort of plunder inspired, we might pursue these revolutionary instruments of death to their destination, and see many an emigrant laid prostrate with the former covering of his parents' dust. On many a countenance doomed to long night, the sun once again shone, and many met its beams, whose features preserved all their original force and character. Among others, madame Sevigné was found entire, with the unfading bloom of healthy and virtuous old age: but as the edict against aristocracy and privileges comprehended

prehended talents as well as birth, the  
wise as well as the mighty suffered in the  
general proscription against lead coffins;  
except Descartes, whose bones were put  
into a basket, and carried to the Pantheon,  
where he is fated to repose with the  
“ immortal and divine Marat.”

## LETTER VII.

**W**HILE Paris was delivered up to the most execrable factions, of which I shall hereafter give you a detail, the western departments became the theatre of calamities infinitely more tremendous. The struggles which took place previously to the 31st of May between the republicans and the conspirators, together with the defeat of the northern armies, and the defection of Dumourier, had diverted the attention of government from the dangers by which they were menaced in the Vendée. Of this war we yet know but little, and what we do know is only the history written by the party which persecuted.

Of all the evils which infest mankind,

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those

those occasioned by war are the most destructive. The hurricane, the earthquake, and the volcano, those convulsions in nature which shake the earth to its basis, and seem to threaten it with annihilation, are not to be compared with the scourges of war. We read of cities besieged and taken by storm, without sympathizing very deeply in the history. We see neither the insidious mine which shatters a thousand limbs at one blow, nor hear the cannon and the bomb, which perform the work of destruction more openly. The soldier climbing precipices, or scaling walls, to fall with indiscriminate rage on the old, the infant, and the defenceless, and to convert flourishing cities into one vast cemetery, is only a being of romance to those who have lived at a distance from such scenes, and the tenor of whose days has glided away in tranquillity. When the laws of war according to the regulations of civilized society

society are observed, the miseries are still tremendous : the laws of nature are perverted ; it is the young, not the old, that descend first to the tomb, and all the dear and tender relations of life are broken—the father laments his son—the wife the husband torn from them to serve the purposes of ambition or cruelty—whole countries are depopulated, fields lie uncultivated, and famine produces despair.

If such are the evils attendant on war when men murder each other without provocation and without resentment ; when they scarcely know either the cause of the dispute which brought them into the field, or for whom they are going to shed their blood ; what must be the horror of that conflict where every regulation of humanity is considered as conspiracy and treason, where every action becomes laudable in proportion as it becomes ferocious, where murder is the

only mark of bravery, and where extermination alone is conquest !

The progress of the royalists after the events of the 10th of August to the epocha of Dumourier's defection, had remained unnoticed ; nor was it till they had raised a most formidable camp and menaced Nantes, Angers, and other cities, and issued their formal manifestoes demanding the re-establishment of the priesthood, nobility, and royalty, that any effective measures were taken to repress them. The first generals that were sent against them, who were Berruyer, Marie, and Ligonier, acted, it is said, as if they were their allies, rather than their enemies ; and Quetinau, who succeeded them, is accused of having surrendered Touars, with the magazines which it contained, and an army of four thousand men.

These defections on the one side, and the victories of the royalists on the other, at length roused the convention, who decreed

decreed that an army of three hundred thousand men should be raised to succour what they called the patriots in the Vendée, who were opposed by the robbers. As this seemed to be an extra-service, great rewards were given to those who would enlist to go and assist "their brethren;" but most of these heroes, who were paid enormous sums to perform this act of charity, went and increased the armies of the malcontents, instead of fighting against them. A short time after the 31st of May, Saumur was taken by the royalists, and a number of other important places, Véhiers, Partenay, Bressuire, and Fontenay the capital of the department, fell into their power. The armies of the convention fled continually before numbers greatly inferior, and abandoned their magazines, baggage, and cannon; so that the Vendéan troops were furnished completely with stores of every kind from the cowardice of the



conventional forces, or the treachery of their commanders. While these disgraces befel the armies on the western side, Nantes, which was besieged by an army of forty thousand men, was defended with five thousand, by Canclaux, who by the prudence and vigour of his operations saved the province of Brittany, and gained several important victories. Other generals who appeared to have the means as well as the intention of finishing the war expeditiously, among whom was the former duc de Biron\*, were

\* Madame Roland was a prisoner with Biron in the Pelagie. "At this moment," she says, "Biron is my fellow prisoner. Biron came to Paris at the latter period of Pache's administration, to denounce him to the convention, provided with papers to prove the minister's dilapidations. Biron saw him, was seduced by his seeming frankness, and was persuaded that there was more of ignorance than of ill intention in his conduct. He felt how cruel it would be to send a man to the scaffold who might  
only

were suspended, as well as Canclaux, while Ronsin and Rossignol, two *sansculotte* generals, were loaded with eulogiums by the conspirators of Paris, in proportion as they were defeated by the royalists.

The royalists, encouraged by their successes, and finding themselves so well seconded by these generals, marched on the 27th of July towards Angers, and to a bridge which was an important pass,

only have been deceived: he abandoned his intention, of which he informed Pache himself. Pache comes to an explanation, gets into his own hands the papers and proofs of the complaints against him, and sends Biron to the army in Italy [the Vendée she ought to have said] where he leaves him in want of every thing. He gains a few advantages, nothing is said about them; he makes reclamations, no attention is paid; the time runs on, the evil increases; he insists, and is ordered to Paris, where he arrives, and is shut up in the Pelagies. He now knows the hand of Pache in the tyrant who oppresses him."

called the bridge of Cé. Orders were given to evacuate this post, as had been done in preceding instances. But contrary measures being taken by a deputy in mission, and other dispositions being made by general Tune, both places were saved, and for the first time a victory was obtained. This general gained a still greater advantage, and a fortnight after he was broke.

The evacuation of Cholet by the royalists would have been the consequence of their defeat; but when general Rey was proposing to take advantage of his victory, an imperial edict of the same sansculotte general forced him to a retreat. As a reward for successes which Rey afterwards gained, he also was broke; and his adjutant, who came to Paris to plead for him, was thrown into the dungeon of the Conciergerie.

These plans of military operations were not likely to be attended with much  
success,

success, and have appeared at all times mysterious. Phillipeaux, in his strictures on this war, calls it a strange phenomenon for history, that the government should have looked calmly on, whilst those who gained victories were disgraced, and those whose only prowess had consisted in converting whole armies composed of some of the bravest and best disciplined troops in the republic, into heaps of carcases, were caressed and continued in command. Phillipeaux, in his letter to the committee of public-safety, assures them that the two generals Ronfin and Rossignol had butchered from forty to fifty thousand patriots.

But time reveals most mysteries. At this period the conspirators in Paris were more in dread of the resentment of the departments than they were of the arms of the royalists. Of the various calumnies which they invented against the de-

puties who had fled from Paris, that of joining the royalists was the most industriously propagated ; and while the proscribed deputies were held up to the public as the supporters and actors in a cause which all parties agreed to call rebellion, the conspirators found themselves justified in taking the measures best fitted to exterminate the only rivals they had to dread. Had the royalists been defeated, and the rebellion crushed, the calumny would have been discovered, and all pretence for punishment taken away. It was the interest therefore of the usurpers to menace the people with the vengeance of royalism and federalism united ; and none were better calculated to fulfil their intentions, than those inexperienced and profligate men who had the most remarkable talents for procuring the defeat of the armies they commanded.

Whether or no this be the real explanation of that which has been deemed so  
 myste-

mysterious, must be left to the consideration of those who wish to penetrate into this labyrinth. When we see the history of the war of the Vendée written by the royalists themselves, it is probable that they will say, that their own valour, and the goodness of the cause in which they were engaged, gave them these victories. In yielding its full force to this explanation, and supposing that the conventional armies were defeated by braver troops, it will yet remain unexplained, why, of two classes of conventional generals, those who beat and those who were beaten, the former should have found either imprisonment, or the scaffold, and the others prodigality of favours.

The usurpers having succeeded in their criminal designs against the republican party, now found it necessary to rid themselves of the royalists, whom they had hitherto made useful to their designs.

The latter end of August they formed a different plan for the remainder of the campaign, which consisted in attacking at once the royalists from every point, and finishing the contest as it were at a single blow. The army on the northern side was committed to Rossignol and Ronfin, and the revolutionary legions and the army on the western coast were entrusted to Lechelle. However well this plan might have been combined, the first specimen those who were to execute it gave of obedience to their instructions was to suffer the insurgents to take possession of the island of Noirmoutier, Machecoul, and other places, and evacuate Montaigu, where they abandoned immense magazines of every sort, and the army was reduced to sleep in the open air; while their ignorant or treacherous leaders kept at a convenient distance, surrounded by actresses, courtesans, and all the licentiousness of an eastern

eastern camp, with all the vulgarity of the lowest profligacy.

This defeat was followed by many others, and by the capture also of several towns. The expedition which Lechelle made was so contrived, that his troops had not the means of effecting a retreat. The protection of the city of Nantes was entrusted to him, and he suffered a body of some hundred royalists to cut off its provisions for several days in the face of his whole army; and when the representatives of the people requested him to send a detachment to rescue a convoy of flour which had fallen into the enemy's hands, he treated the application with contempt.

While this general was disposing of the conventional armies on the western side, his colleagues Rossignol and Ronfin, the latter of whom having seen some service took the title of *minister-general*, were preparing to execute the plan of  
the



the campaign on the other side. Instead of marching to attack the enemy, they halted for some time at Saumur and Tours, so as to let the royalist army acquire its proper consistency. To surround the enemy was the great object, and orders were sent to the commanders of the southern armies at Niort, Luçon, and Partenay, to co-operate. The event of this arrangement was, conformably to the ordinary system, the total defeat of these divisions; and on the 18th of September so admirably were the instructions obeyed, that fifty thousand men at Coran and near the passage of the Loire at Cé, commanded by Ronfin and Rosignol, were attacked by an army consisting of three thousand royalists only; and what could appear scarcely credible, the *sansculotte* generals had so ingeniously arranged their troops, that they were not only defeated by this inconsiderable detachment, but the slaughter was immense.

This

This extraordinary defeat will not, I am told, surprise any military man, when he hears that the conventional army was arranged for battle in a single column, in the defiles of Coran, with eight men in front, and presenting a flank to the enemy, who had possession of the heights, of nearly twelve miles in extent. The artillery, instead of being placed on those heights, under the protection of a strong detachment, as was proposed by the guides, and those who knew the country, was placed at the head of this long column, and of course fell into the hands of the royalists, who turned it against the conventional troops, and made great carnage. In the mean time, detachments of the enemy gained possession of the heights without difficulty and without resistance, massacred the troops below, taking them in flank, and made them, from the confusion into which they were thrown, the exterminators of each other.

The

The generals who commanded this expedition were, in the mean time, regaling themselves at a distance, with their mistresses, some of whom were afterwards goddesses of reason; but they had the prudence to destroy their magazines, instead of leaving them as usual at the disposition of the enemy. The harvest of that part of the country was just then gathered in, and would have sufficed them for a whole year, had they secured it agreeably to the orders of the convention.

This new plan of a campaign was not attended with more happy success than the former, and the mystery which embarrassed Phillipeaux became still more inexplicable. It would be difficult indeed to define what could be the motive which led the government to look with so much complacency on this continued system of defeat and carnage, did we not see what combinations of crooked policy  
were

were put into execution to secure the purposes of ferocious ambition. The party of the Gironde, being completely crushed, gave them no longer any inquietude, and it became now the interest of the usurpers to bring the war to a speedy issue. The two former plans not having succeeded, the committee of public safety published another. These conspirators had seen how efficacious their decrees had been in several instances, and therefore imagined a mode of putting an end to this destructive contest by decreeing that it should finish on the 20th of October, and that the generals should receive the triumphal crown on the first of November following. We should be inclined to smile at this excess of folly, if that disposition were not suppressed by indignation and horror at the atrocious orders which were given for this purpose to their armies, " that desolation and in-

discriminate

discriminate destruction must now become the order of the day."

The decree having stated in express terms, "that all the retreats, mills, and ovens of the robbers should be destroyed and burnt, and that the minister of war should be ordered to send combustible matter for that purpose;" and the proclamation of the convention having invited the soldiers of liberty to exterminate all these robbers, before the end of October; "the soldiers of liberty," and all those who were invited to the accomplishment of this new plan of the campaign, prepared to put it into execution. Neither the committee of usurpation, nor the convention had been nice in the definition of their terms, and therefore the soldiers of liberty undertook to construe them at their pleasure. Accordingly, every house of the peaceful inhabitant came within the definition of the retreat of a robber, since every inhabitant of the

Vendée

Vendée was considered as a robber, and consequently his dwelling must be a retreat.

Whether or no the instruments of this barbarous and execrable policy reasoned after this manner, they certainly became practical logicians; and the army, in addition to their hundred thousand bayonets, were armed with a hundred thousand torches, and having been pronounced by the usurpers the executors of their just vengeance, the property of the armed royalist and the peaceable republican became alike objects of their rapacity and fury; and indiscriminate massacre and plunder were literally the order of the day.

In the first days of the revolution, when liberty and philosophy went hand in hand together, what a moral revolution was instantly effected throughout Europe, by the sublime and immortal principles which this great change seemed about to introduce into government! But what eternal

but she triumphs in the conquests she has made over herself. It is some relief, while I am struggling through the gloomy history of these horrors, that I see again the dawn of that glorious light which will chase them away. The last stroke has been given to that vile and degrading system, which ignoble usurpers had framed : we may now approach the altar of Liberty with confidence and hope; the hideous spectres that haunted it have fled for ever ; and its incense in future will rise grateful to heaven, and spread fragrance over a regenerated land.

# A P P E N D I X.

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## No. I.

**A**FTER the siege of Perugia, say the historians, in spite of the capitulation, the answer of Augustus was : “ You must all perish.” Three hundred of the principal citizens were dragged to the altar of Julius Cæsar, and there on the day of the ides of March were murdered : after which the remainder of the inhabitants were put without distinction to the edge of the sword ; and the city, which was one of the finest in Italy, was reduced to ashes, and as much effaced as Herculaneum from the surface of the earth.

There was formerly a law in Rome, says Tacitus, which defined state crimes and



high treasons, and which decreed the punishment of pain of death. These crimes of high treason, under the republic, were reduced to four sorts : namely, if an army had been abandoned in an enemy's country ; if sedition had been excited ; if the members of the constituted bodies had mismanaged public affairs, or misapplied the public money ; and if the majesty of the Roman people had been degraded. The emperors wanted but a few additional articles to this law to involve both the citizens and whole cities in a general proscription. Augustus was the first to extend this law of high treason, in which he comprehended writings which he called *counter-revolutionary*. Under his successors, the extension of this law became unbounded. When simple remarks were construed into state crimes, it required but a little stretch of power to change looks either of compassion or sorrow, or even sighs, and silence itself, into guilt.

It

It was a crime of high treason or *counter-revolution* in the city of Nursia to have erected a monument to its inhabitants who were killed at the siege of Mutina, in fighting under Augustus himself: but it was, because Augustus then fought with Brutus; and Nursia met with the fate of Perugia.

Crime of *counter-revolution* in L. Drusus, for having enquired of fortune tellers whether he should not be at some future time a rich man. Crime of *counter-revolution* in Crematius Cordus, a news writer, for having called Brutus and Cassius the last of the Romans. Crime of *counter-revolution* in one of the descendants of Cassius, for having in his possession a portrait of his great uncle. Crime of *counter-revolution* in Mamercus Securus, for having composed a tragedy in which there was a verse liable to a double construction. Crime of *counter-revolution* in Augustus Silenus, for living expensively.

Crime of *counter-revolution* in Petreius, for having had a dream about Claudius. Crime of *counter-revolution* in Appius Silenus, because the wife of Claudius had had a dream about him. Crime of *counter-revolution* in Pomponius, because a friend of Sejanus had sought an asylum at one of his country-houses. Crime of *counter-revolution*, to complain of the misery of the times, for it was blaming the government. Crime of *counter-revolution*, in not invoking the divine genius of Caligula. For this omission, a great number of citizens were beaten with clubs, condemned to the mines, or to be thrown to the wild beasts, and some even to be sawed asunder. Crime of *counter-revolution* in the mother of the consul Fuscius Geminus, for having lamented the fatal death of her son. Unless you were willing to perish yourself, you must express joy at the death of your friends or relations. Under Nero, many, whose kindred

dred he had destroyed, went to return thanks to the gods, and illuminated their houses. It was necessary at least to wear an air of satisfaction, and cheerfulness, and every one was afraid lest fear itself should be the means of his condemnation.

Every thing gave umbrage to the tyrant. Was a citizen popular? He was the prince's rival, and might kindle a civil war. *Studia civium in se verteret; et si multi idem audeant, bellum esse. Suspected.*

Did a man shun popularity, and confine himself to his fire-side? This retired kind of life made you remarked, and gave you consideration. *Quanto metu occultior, tanto plus famæ adeptus. Suspected.*

Were you rich? There was imminent danger that the people would be corrupted by your liberality—*Auri vim atque opes Plauti principi infensas. Suspected.*

Were you poor? What then?—Invincible emperor, this man must be watched more narrowly. There is no one so enterprising as he that has nothing. Syllam inopem, unde præcipuam audaciam. *Suspected.*

Are you of a thoughtful melancholy character, or slovenly in your manners? You are afflicted because public affairs go so well. Hominem bonis publicis mœstum. *Suspected.*

If, on the contrary, a citizen amuses himself and lives luxuriously; he is merry only because the emperor has had an attack of the gout, which happily is nothing: we must shew this gentleman that his majesty is in the prime of life. Reddendam pro intempestivâ licentiâ mœstam et funebrem noctem, quâ sentiat vivere Virilium et imperare. *Suspected.*

Was he virtuous, or austere in his manners? Good! a new Brutus, who pretends with his pale countenance and jacobin

fin wig to criticise an agreeable and well-powdered court. Gliscere æmulos Brutorum, vultus rigidi et tristis quo tibi lasciviam exprobrent. *Suspected.*

Was he a philosopher, an orator, or a poet? He wanted to have more fame than those who were at the head of affairs! Could an author be tolerated who had more attention paid him in the upper gallery, than the emperor in the stage box? Virginium et Rufum claritudo nominis. *Suspected.*

In short, if you acquired military reputation, you became the more dangerous from your talents. With a silly general you knew what to do; if he became a traitor, he could not so dexterously betray his army to the enemy, but that some would come back. But an officer of merit, such as Corbulo or Agricola, if he became a traitor, not a man would return. The best way was to dispatch them. At least, great emperor, hasten

and rid the army of them. *Multa militaris famæ metum fecerat. Suspected.*

You may well imagine that it was a very serious thing indeed if you were a grandson or one of the family of Augustus. You might some day have pretensions to the throne. *Nobilem, et quid hinc spectaretur à Cæsarum posteris. Suspected.*

And all the *suspected* did not get off as with us, by being sent to the Madelettes, the Scotch College, or St. Pelagie\*. The prince sent them to their physician or apothecary to choose in four-and-twenty hours what kind of death they liked best. *Missus centurio qui maturaret eum.*

It was thus impossible to possess any kind of quality, unless it became an instrument of tyranny, without awaking the jealousy of the despot, or exposing yourself to certain ruin. It was a crime

\* Prisons in Paris.

to have a great place, or resign it; but the greatest of all crimes was to be incorruptible. Nero had so thoroughly extirpated all good and virtuous men, that after having got rid of Thrasea and Soranes, he boasted that he had abolished even the name of Virtue from the earth. When the senate had condemned them, the emperor wrote a letter of thanks for their having put to death enemies of the republic. The tribune Clodius erected an altar to Liberty in the place where Cicero's house had been rased to the ground, and the people shouted, " Vive la Liberté !"

One was executed on account of his name, or that of his ancestors, and another on account of a beautiful house at Alba. Valerius Asiaticus, because the empress was pleased with his gardens; Statilius, because she did not like the cut of his face; and a numerous multitude without any reason whatever.

Foranius, the tutor, the old friend of

L 4

Augustus,



Augustus, was proscribed by his pupil without any apparent cause, except that he was an honest man, and loved his country. Neither age nor innocence could shield Quintus Gellius from the bloody hands of the executioner; and this same Augustus, whose clemency has been so much boasted, tore out his eyes with his own hands. You were betrayed and poniarded by your enemies or slaves; or if you had no enemy, your host, your friend, your son became your assassin.

In one word, under three reigns the natural death of a celebrated man was so rare a thing, that it was put into the gazette as a sort of epocha, and transmitted by historians to the remembrance of ages. "Under this consulate," says our annalist, "the pontiff Piso died in his bed, which appeared somewhat miraculous."

The death of so many excellent citizens appeared a less calamity than the infolence

lence and scandalous fortunes of their murderers and denunciators. Every day the sacred and inviolable informer made his triumphant entry into the palaces of the dead, and seized on some rich inheritance. All these denunciators assumed the most respectable names, and called themselves Cotta, Scipio, Regulus, Cæsius, Severus. Denunciation was the only means of arriving at honours, and Regulus was made consul three times on account of his informations.

In this manner every one threw himself in the way of arriving at dignities, since the road was so easy ; and the *marquis* Serenus, in order to make his first appearance with *éclat*, and gain reputation as an informer, began a prosecution against his aged father as a *counter-revolutionist* ; after which he decorated himself with the sounding name of Brutus.

The judges resembled the accusers :

the tribunals, which ought to have been the protectors of life and property, were become butcheries ; and robbery and murder bore the names of confiscation and punishment.

If there were no means of sending a man to the tribunal, he was assassinated or imprisoned. Celer Ælius, the famous Locusta, the physician Anicetus, were poisoners by profession, privileged men, travelling in the suite of the court, and a kind of lords of the bed-chamber to the crown. When these half-measures were not found sufficient, the tyrant had recourse to a general proscription. Thus it was that Caligulla declared all his friends and the partisans of Sejanus enemies of the republic, to the number of thirty thousand. Thus it was that Sylla in one day forbade the use of fire and water to seventy thousand Romans. If a lion-emperor had a prætorian guard of tigers and panthers, they would

would not have torn in pieces a greater number than the common informers, the freedmen, the poisoners, and the cut-throats of the Cæsars; for the cruelty caused by hunger ceases with hunger, while that caused by fear, by the avarice and the suspicions of tyrants has no bounds. To what a degree of degradation and baseness must not the human race have fallen, when we think that Rome suffered the government of a monster, who complained that his reign had not been signalized by any calamity, pestilence, famine, or earthquake; who envied Augustus the happiness of having had under his empire an army cut to pieces, and in the reign of Tiberius the disaster of the amphitheatre of Fidenæ, where fifty thousand persons perished; and to sum up all in one word, who wished that the Roman people had but one neck, to put it *in masse* through\* the little window!"

\* The cant word for the guillotine.

## No. II.

*The two last letters of young CUSTINE to his wife.*

Nine o'clock in the morning.

**I** CANNOT begin my last day better, than in speaking to you of the tender and painful sentiments which I feel on your account. I sometimes endeavour to suppress them, but they are never very distant from my mind. What will be your fate? They will leave you at least your habitation, your chamber at least? Melancholy ideas, melancholy reflections!

I have slept nine hours. Why was not your night as calm as mine? for it is your tenderness, not your affliction, that is necessary to me.

You already know the sacrifice that I have made. I have a poor unfortunate companion here who has seen you when  
you

you were a child, and who seems a worthy man. What a happiness it is at the close of my misfortunes to have the means of alleviating those of others. Tell this to Philoctetes.

I have forgotten to tell you that I made almost wholly my own defence, and only made it on account of those who love me.

Four o'clock.

I MUST leave you—I send you my hair in this letter; madame . . . . . promises me to give you both. Assure her of my gratitude.

It is all over, my poor Delphina: for the last time I embrace you! I cannot see you, and even if I could I would not. The separation would be too cruel, and these are not moments for indulging my feelings. What do I say? for indulging my feelings!—How shall I avoid so doing? Your image!—there is but one way

way—that of banishing it from my remembrance with savage but necessary barbarity. My reputation shall be such as it ought to be; and as for life, it is a thing frail by its nature. Regret a few, the only emotions which give a momentary disturbance to my tranquillity. You, who know so well my sentiments, will know how to express them; but drive from your thoughts the remembrance of those regrets which are the most painful to me, for they are addressed to you!

I do not believe that I have ever done evil to any person intentionally. I often felt the warmest desire to do good. I could have wished to have done more; but I do not feel the burden of remorse, and why should I feel any disquietude? To die is necessary, and an event as natural as that of being born.—Your fate afflicts me—may it be softened!—may it even one day become happy!—This is the wish nearest to my heart.—Teach your  
son

son to know his father. May your watchful care banish vice far from him ! and as for misfortune, may he learn how to bear it as he ought !

Farewell ! I do not frame axioms of the hopes of my imagination or my heart ; but be assured that I do not leave you without the expectation that we shall meet again. I have forgiven the few who seemed to rejoice in my imprisonment. Bestow a reward on the person who will convey to you this letter."



## No. III.

“ **T**HE situation of affairs, and the discontented state of the public mind, alarmed the court. The ministers soon became the object of general animadversion, and their conduct did not appear at all favourable to the establishment of the constitution, which the king had sworn to maintain contrary to his will and feelings, and which he was determined not to support. Amidst the frequent changes and confusion which then took place in administration, the court was puzzled and doubtful of whom to make choice. It was said openly and loudly, that, if the king was sincere, he would choose his ministers amongst men whose reputation for patriotism was not doubtful. The king had hitherto decided as cowardice or fear dictated; sometimes with the hopes of gaining over those who were named, or with the resolution,

lution, if this plan did not succeed, of driving them altogether from the court. At length the king seemed determined to choose his ministers amongst those who were called patriots, for then the appellation was not dishonoured. How that came to pass I never have been informed. Intelligent men reflected how important it was to direct the choice of the court towards men of talents and of respectable character; for it was possible that it might have taken a malignant pleasure in making a selection of a set of wrong-headed Jacobins, whose blunders and exaggerations would have justified complaints, and brought disgrace on the whole body of patriots. I do not know who it was that in the committee of the Place Vendôme named Roland as one of those who ought to be chosen; but his name was connected with the idea \* of a  
man

\* The committee of the Place Vendôme was

man well informed, who had written on several branches of administration, who had experience in these affairs, who besides possessed a considerable degree of reputation, and whose principles unequivocally expressed in his writings, even before the revolution, discovered him to be a warm partisan of liberty, being so in all respects. The king was not a stranger to these considerations, as I shall have occasion to prove.

This project was communicated to us only three days before the new ministry was formed. Brissot came to me one evening when I was alone, and told me that Roland was thought of as minister. I smiled, and asked him what he meant by his pleasantry? He answered me, that he was in earnest, informed me of what

an assembly of patriot deputies, who met at the house of one of their colleagues for the discussion of public affairs.

I have

I have just related, and added, that he was come to know if Roland would undertake the charge. I promised to speak to Roland on the subject, and give him an answer the next day. Roland was as much astonished as myself at the event. A multiplicity of affairs to one of his active mind was no cause of objection; and he told me, that as he had always observed placemen to be beings of a very middling rank with respect to talents, and yet public business went forward, he was not himself afraid of the undertaking; that the situation was indeed critical, on account of the distinct interest of the court and the uncertainty of the king's intentions; but that whoever attended only to his duty, and was careless about the loss of his place in executing it, had nothing to fear: besides which, a zealous man, who was conscientious in the means he made use of, could not be without hope of being of essential service  
to

to his country. Roland therefore determined to accept the office, and made known his intentions to Brissot, who came the next evening at eleven o'clock at the breaking up of the council, accompanied by Dumourier, who announced to him officially that the king had just made choice of him as minister for home-affairs. Dumourier, who had been minister for some little time, spoke of the king's sincere dispositions to support the constitution, and of his hopes of seeing the machine go on with success, when the whole of the council should be animated by the same spirit: he testified also to Roland his particular satisfaction in seeing so virtuous and enlightened a patriot named to the administration of government.

Brissot observed that the department for home-affairs was the most delicate and the most intricate of all, and that it was a consolation to the friends of liberty

to see it entrusted to pure and firm hands. The conversation turned slightly on these heads, and the hour was fixed on for Roland the next day to be presented to his majesty, to take the oath, and his seat at the council.

I found in Dumourier the manly air of a foldier, the address of an able courtier, the style of a man of wit, but no trace of truth. In comparing this man with his new colleague, whose austerity and frankness sometimes border on rudeness, I asked myself if they were made to go on long together? "Here is a man," said Roland, after their departure, "who possesses talents." "Yes," replied I, "and against which you must be on your guard; for I think him capable of casting you all off, if you do not keep to his pace: we shall see." The first time Roland appeared at court in his ordinary simple dress, which he had for a long time worn for the sake of convenience, a few  
scattered

scattered hairs, combed over his venerable head, a round hat, and his shoes tied with strings, those valets of the court who placed the highest importance in the etiquette on which their own existence depends, looked at him with disdain, and with some astonishment. One of them approached Dumourier, and, knitting his brows, whispered him, while he pointed out with his eyes the object of his surprise, " Sir! sir! . . . . . no buckles in his shoes!" Dumourier, putting on an air of affected gravity, exclaimed, " Ay, sir, it is all over, we are all ruined." The story went round, and those laughed at it who had the least disposition to be diverted.

Lewis XVI. behaved to his ministry with the greatest good-humour. This man was not precisely such a personage as he has been industriously represented by those who were interested in degrading him. He was neither that stupid for  
which

which he has been held out to be for the purpose of exciting contempt, nor that polite, good and affectionate character for which his friends have extolled him. Nature had formed him in a common kind of mould: he would have acted well in an obscure situation; but he was depraved by a royal education, and lost his moderation at a critical period, in which his safety could have been effected only by the assistance of genius or virtue. A common mind, educated at court, and taught from the cradle the art of dissembling, acquires many advantages in its commerce with mankind. The art of discovering to each no more than he would wish him to know, is only a habit, to which constant exercise gives the appearance of address; and a man must be born an idiot, in order to appear a fool in a similar situation. Lewis XVI. had besides a good memory, and a great share of activity;

he



he never was a moment unemployed, and read a good deal. He had the most perfect and minute knowledge of all the treaties made by France with the neighbouring powers; he was well acquainted with its history, and was the best geographer in his kingdom. Knowledge of names; the just application of them to the physiognomies of the persons of the court to whom they belonged; acquaintance with all their private anecdotes, had been extended by him to every individual, who had at all distinguished himself in the revolution; and no one of any quality or description could be mentioned to him, of whom he could not give some kind of information founded on their private history. But Lewis XVI. without strength of character, was confined in his views, and had twisted as it were his feelings by superstitious prejudices and jesuitical principles: The great ideas of religion, the belief of a God, and the assurance of immortality,

are perfectly in harmony with philosophy; and while they rear its column on those most solid of all foundations, they likewise adorn it with the most finished capital. Wretched are the legislators who despise these powerful means of inspiring political virtues, and of forming the morals of a nation. If they were even illusions, we ought to cherish them, for the consolation of mankind: but the religion of our priests presented us only with objects of childish fear, and miserable mummeries, instead of good works; and also consecrated the whole code of despotism, on which the authority of the established church is founded. Lewis XVI. was literally afraid of hell, the horns and hoofs of the devil, and excommunication; and with all this it was impossible he should be any thing but a poor creature of a king. If he had been born two hundred years earlier, and had

had a reasonable wife, he would have made no more noise in the world than other princes of his line, who have passed across the stage without doing either much good or evil : but ascending the throne amidst the dissoluteness of the court of Lewis XV. and the disordered state of the treasury, and surrounded by corrupted men, he was drawn on by a giddy woman, who joined to Austrian insolence the forwardness of youth, and to the arrogance of grandeur the intoxication of the senses, and the carelessness of levity ; and who was herself seduced by all the vices of an Asiatic court. Lewis XVI. too weak to hold the reins of government, which was now falling headlong into ruin, and crumbling to desolation, hastened his own by faults without number. Neckar, who always acted the pathetic in politics as well as in writing ; a man of moderate abilities, but of which the world entertained a high

high opinion, because he had formed a high opinion of them himself, which he was careful to make known; without foresight; a sort of a retail financier, who could only calculate the contents of a purse, and was talking continually of his reputation, as women of intrigue talk of their chastity; Neckar was but a sorry pilot for the storm that was gathering. France was, as it were, exhausted of men: it is a thing highly surprising that they should have been so scarce in this revolution: it has brought forth scarcely any but pigmies. It is not because there was any want of wit, of information, of knowledge, of philosophy: these ingredients had never been more common: it was the blaze of the torch just expiring. But that energy of soul which J. J. Rousseau has so admirably defined as the first characteristic of the hero, supported by that solidity of judgment which knows the just value of

every thing ; with that foresight which penetrates into futurity, the re-union of which constitutes character, and forms the superior man, we have looked for it every where, but it has been no where to be found.

Lewis XVI. continually floating between the fear of irritating his subjects, and his wish to keep them within bounds, and unable to govern them, convened the states-general, instead of reforming the expences, and regulating his court. After having himself unveiled the spring, and shewed the way to innovation, he hoped to stop its progress, by affecting a power against which he had furnished arms, and against which he had himself given instructions for resistance.

No other means were left him, than to sacrifice with a good grace a part of his authority, in order, by means of the other, to seize the whole, on a proper occasion, which he was not however likely  
to

to do; since he gave himself up to the most desperate sort of intrigues, the only sort familiar to those whom he chose for his advisers, under the protection and patronage of his wife. He had certainly preserved under the constitution sufficient means both of power and of happiness, if he had had the wisdom to keep himself within bounds. Want of ability had disabled him from preventing the establishment of the new government; but honesty alone would have been sufficient to have saved him, if he had been sincere in executing, when he had accepted the constitution: Unhappily for himself, on one hand to support what he was overthrowing with the other, was his crooked policy; and this perfidious conduct first excited mistrust, and then finished by kindling general indignation.

When he had made choice of patriotic ministers, he was particularly anxious to inspire them with confidence;

and he succeeded so well, that for three weeks, I saw Roland and Clavieres, enchanted with the king's dispositions, thinking only of the happy order of things, and flattering themselves that the revolution was finished.—“ Good God !” I said to them, “ every time I see you come from the council with this great confidence, I always think that you are about to commit some act of great folly.” “ I assure you,” answered Clavieres, “ that the king is perfectly convinced that his interest is intimately connected with the observance of the laws which have been just established : he reasons about them too feelingly not to have a perfect conviction of this truth.” “ If,” added Roland, “ he be not an honest man, he is the most arrant cheat in the kingdom : dissimulation can hardly go so far.” “ And for my part,” I replied, “ I have no great confidence in any man's regard for the constitution, who has been educated.

educated in the prejudices of despotism and habits of dissipation, and whose conduct latterly has exhibited a total want both of genius and virtue. Lewis XVI. must be a man very much above the common standard, to have any sincere regard for a constitution which narrows the limits of his power; and if he had been such a man, he would not have suffered those events to have taken place which have brought about this constitution." My great argument for his insincerity was founded on his flight to Varennes.

There was a council four times a week. The ministers agreed to dine together at each other's houses by turns every council day. I received them on Fridays. De Grave was the minister of war. He was a slight man in all respects; nature had made him mild and timid; his prejudices would have made him haughty, but his heart forced him to be gentle;



and from his embarrassment to reconcile these different parts of his character, he became in reality nothing. I think I see him marching with his courtier-like air, his head quite aloft from his feeble frame, shewing the white of his blue eyes, which he could scarcely keep open after dinner, without the help of two or three cups of coffee; speaking but little, as if he had been reserved, but which silence proceeded only from penury of ideas: in fine, he was so bewildered amidst the business of his department, that he asked leave to retire. Lacoste was a true clerk of office under the old system, with an insignificant mien, a cold look, and a dramatical tone, with talents for the ordinary run of affairs: but his formal physiognomy concealed a violence of character which, in discussions where he met with contradiction, made him ridiculous: he had no comprehensive views, nor the activity necessary for a minister.

minister. Duranthon, who had been brought up from Bourdeaux to be minister of justice, was honest, as they say, but very indolent : he had an air of vanity, and always appeared to me an old woman, from his timorous character and his consequential babble. Clavieres was appointed minister of finance, from the reputation he had gained for his knowledge in that branch, but of which I am no judge. He was laborious and active, irascible and obstinate, as those men generally are who live confined to their desks ; punctilious and difficult in his discussions, and often in contradiction with Roland : these two men esteemed without ever loving each other, but never disagreed in the great leading principles of their duties.

Dumourier had a greater share than any of these in what is called wit, and less of morality. Diligent and brave, a good general, a thorough-paced courtier,

a good writer, a ready speaker, and capable of great undertakings ; he was deficient only in firmness of character, and wanted a cooler head to execute the plans he had conceived : good humoured with his friends, and ready to cheat every one of them ; assiduous to the ladies, but no way fitted to succeed with those who were to be won only by tenderness ; he was altogether formed for the ministerial intrigues of a corrupted court. His splendid qualities, and his love of glory led us to think that he might be usefully employed in the armies of the republic ; and perhaps he would have acted well if the convention had acted wisely ; for he had too much good sense not to behave as an honest man, when his reputation and his interest were so intimately concerned.

At this time De Grave was about to be dismissed. The ministers and the patriot deputies were at a loss on whom to fix for his successor, since the military  
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men who had distinguished themselves were almost all of them hostile to the constitution. Roland thought of Servan, who had been long in the service, and had obtained the cross of St. Lewis; and whose principles were not equivocal, since he had published them previously to the revolution in an excellent work called "The soldier a citizen." We knew him personally from having seen him at Lyons, where he had the deserved reputation of a wise and industrious man; and where he retired after having lost his place at court as governor of the pages, his politics not being suitable either to those of M. St. Priest, or the palace.

Servan is an upright man in the full extent of the term, of an ardent mind, pure morals, with all the austerity of a philosopher, and all the goodness of an affectionate heart; an enlightened patriot, a brave soldier, a vigilant minister: he wanted only perhaps a little more cool-

ness of temper, and more energy of character; but he had a degree of merit rare to find, and we should have been too happy to have had many men of this stamp.

The sittings of the council might be called decent in comparison with what they became afterwards; but they were at that time puerile, considering the great interests which were at stake. Each of the ministers who had *bons* \* to sign, or other papers belonging to his office, went to the king on the council day to arrange this particular business before the council began. They all went afterwards into the council-hall; where, after the decrees had been signed, which the minister of justice presented, debates took place respecting the operations of government, internal order, relations with foreign powers, peace or

\* *Bons* are orders for certain operations, most commonly for the delivery of money.

war, &c. With respect to the proclamations of the day, they had only to examine the decree and apply it, which was always a short business. The king suffered his ministers to talk : in the mean time he read the gazette, the English newspapers in their own language, or wrote letters. The sanction of the decrees, however, fixed his attention : he did not give his sanction readily, but never refused. When a decree was presented for the first time, he put off sanctioning it till the following council, when he came with his mind made up.

With respect to objects of great political concern, he often eluded examining them, by turning the conversation on different subjects, or on matters peculiar to each of the ministers. If the business turned on war affairs, he talked about travels ; if it was a diplomatic discussion, he began a history of the manners of the country in question, or made enquiries,

enquiries about its situation and produce; if the examination of the state affairs led him into details of agriculture and rural œconomy, he questioned Roland about his works, talked to Dumourier about his anecdotes, and so with the rest. The council in short was little else than a coffee-house, where every one learnt the news of the day, and amused himself with trifles: there was no register kept of the deliberations, no secretary to minute them. After three or four hours conversation the council broke up, without having done any thing, except putting some signatures, and this took place three times a week. “ But this is pitiful ! ” I could not help exclaiming with some ill humour when, on Roland’s return, I asked him what had passed. “ You are all of you too courteous, because you meet with no opposition, because you are treated with affability and politeness, because you have the appearance

ance of doing each of you in your respective departments just what you please. I am much afraid that you will all be deceived."

"But nevertheless," says Roland, "business goes on."—"Yes, but time is lost; for in the torrent of affairs that that is overwhelming you, I would rather see you employ three hours in solitary meditation on those great combinations of events before you, than waste them in useless talk."

The enemy were now forming their plans, and it became absolutely necessary to declare war; a measure which brought on warm discussions, and which the king assented to with extreme repugnance: he had delayed the decision as long as possible, and appeared to yield only when he saw that the majority of the assembly were of that opinion, and that his council was unanimous.

The continuance and multiplicity of  
religious.



religious troubles respecting which the minister for home-affairs had continually but in vain solicited him for some time past to take strong and repressive measures, now compelled him to do so. On the other hand, the bold steps taken by the foreign troops being formidable and menacing, had given the minister of war, Servan, an idea of a military project, which the assembly seized on with enthusiasm, and instantly decreed.

It is very true that these two decrees, one for forming a camp of twenty thousand men between Paris and the frontiers, and the other respecting the priests, were altogether decisive. The court beheld in these measures the overthrow of its secret machinations, of all its plans of partial insurrections, by the means of fanaticism, and the progress of the enemy towards Paris; both of which operations it protected.

The king was too much decided in  
refusing

refusing his sanction to be very earnest in declaring his determination. He made use of different pretences, by which means he avoided an explanation for fifteen days. A debate was begun several times on these two articles. Roland and Servan insisted with warmth, and with great energy declared the most striking truths, because each felt the importance and the necessity of the law as it respected his particular province. The general interest of the affair was a thing evident to all of them, and the six ministers had but one opinion on this subject.

During these disputes, Dumourier, who was intimate with the king, and whose morals were more in unison with those of the court, was often a visitor of the queen; and as he was not in great harmony with his colleagues, the austerity of whose manners was a reproach to his own, he found soon the means of getting

getting rid of them, and entered into arrangements the effects of which were not long in being felt. A misunderstanding, or rather a serious dispute had taken place between Dumourier and his colleagues, particularly Roland, respecting baron Carieve, whom Dumourier had made director-general of the foreign department. A report was spread that the sum of one hundred thousand livres was paid to Madame de Beauvert, who lived with Dumourier as his mistress, and did the honours of his table, to the great scandal of those who were connected with him. Dumourier received the representations that were made to him by Roland, both with respect to his neglect of decency, and his attachment to this director-general, with ill-humour: he quitted the meeting of the patriotic deputies, and became visibly cool towards Roland. "From this moment," continues Madame Roland, "he ceased holding any farther commu-

commu-

communication with the deputies, and became more reserved towards his colleagues; and no doubt began to meditate how he might most expeditiously rid himself of those whose characters were least in unison with his own. I foresaw the effect of these conferences, and said to Roland; "If you were an intriguer, capable of behaving according to the errors of the old court and its former system, I should say that the moment is come when you ought to get rid of Dumourier, to hinder him from playing you some trick. But honest men understand nothing of these sort of courtier-like skirmishes, and Roland was as incapable of having recourse to them as he was unfitted to practise them.

The delay of the sanction was now understood as a positive veto, as the time was almost expired. We felt that the council not having courage and confidence enough to pronounce their opinions

ons *in mass*, it was Roland's duty, and what integrity and courage directed him, to step forward singly; and we determined together on writing the well-known letter to the king. I composed this letter myself, which was written without much meditation. He carried it to the council to read it aloud on the day when the king, who was still urged respecting his sanction, required the ministers to give each of them his opinion written and signed, and then went rapidly on to talk of other affairs. Roland returned home, added a few lines in the cover of the letter, and had it put into the king's hands on the morning of the 11th of June. The next day, the 12th, about eight o'clock, Servan called on us with a gay countenance, "Give me joy," said he, "I have had the honour to be turned out." "My husband," I replied, "will soon share the same fate, and I am somewhat picqued that you  
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are the first." He told us, that having gone that morning to the king for some private business, he had talked with him very warmly on the necessity of the camp of twenty thousand men, if he was really in earnest in opposing the designs of the enemy; that the king had turned his back to him in very ill humour; and that Dumourier had just left the war-office, where he had gone to take the seals in consequence of an order which he carried with him. "Dumourier! he plays a sorry part—but it does not surprise me." The three preceding days he had often been at the Thuilleries in long conferences with the queen; and it is not amiss to remark, that Baron Carriève had some interest through her women. Roland hearing that Servan was with me, left the persons to whom he was giving audience, learned the news, and sent to invite his colleagues, Dumourier excepted, to come to him.

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It seemed proper not to wait to be dismissed; and as Servan's dismissal had taken place, those who possessed the same principles ought to give in their own, at least unless the king would recall Servan, and dismiss Dumourier, with whom they ought never again to sit in council. I do not doubt but that if the four ministers had behaved in this manner, the court would not have been a little embarrassed to replace them; that La Cofte, and Duranthon would have done themselves credit, and that the business would have been so much the more interesting for the public, as it became so in a very different manner.

The ministers debated without coming to any conclusion, except that they would meet again the next day at eight o'clock in the morning, and that Roland should prepare a letter for them. I could never have believed, if circumstances had not put me in the way of knowing it,

that judgment and firmness of character were so rare : how few men are there, consequently, fitted for business, and how much fewer still are formed to govern ! Were we to wish for the union of these qualities with perfect disinterestedness, we wish for a Phoenix, almost impossible to find. I am not astonished that men above the common standard, and who are placed at the head of empires, should hold most commonly the human race in contempt. It is the almost necessary consequence of great knowledge of the world ; and in order to avoid the errors into which those may fall who are entrusted with the happiness of nations, there must be a fund of philosophy and of magnanimity not very common.

The ministers kept their appointment, but concluded that it would be better to speak to the king in person than to write to him ; a measure which appeared rather as an expedient to avoid losing their places  
than



than to come to an explanation. While they were yet deliberating, the king sent a message to Daranthon, the minister of justice, to go immediately and alone. The ministers Roland and Clavieres went to wait for him at his hotel. Daranthon returned with a lengthened face and hypocritical air, and drew out slowly from his pocket a paper containing the dismissal of his two colleagues. "You have made us wait a long time for our liberty," said Roland to him, smiling, and taking the paper: he returned and acquainted me with the news, which I had well foreseen. I congratulated him on it, and advised him not to wait till the king announced it to the assembly, but to do it himself; and, since his majesty had taken no advantage of the instructions contained in the letter, to make them useful to the public by publishing them himself. I saw nothing more consistent with the courage of having

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written

written to him, than firmness in sending a copy of it to the assembly : in hearing of your dismissal, the assembly will become acquainted with the cause of it.

This idea proved agreeable to my husband, and every one knows the honours which the assembly conferred on the three ministers Servan, Roland, and Clavieres ; by declaring that their dismissal was accompanied by the regrets of the nation ; as well as the applause bestowed on the letter, which was ordered to be printed and sent into the departments."

This citation from madame Roland's memoirs will not perhaps be thought too long, since it contains the detail of those circumstances which precipitated Lewis XVI. from the throne, and destroyed monarchy in France. It is probable that at some future period this fabric would have fallen amidst the storms of popular discussions : but its dissolution,

had the conduct of the court been different, would have been at least more gentle. I have already mentioned that madame Roland sent me from her prison certain papers, with a view, no doubt, that I should in some happier days vindicate her memory to the world; and I have till this period, when I find that many of her papers have been preserved, felt the keenest regret, that I was compelled by the late sanguinary system to destroy those in our possession without taking a copy, since to have had them discovered was certain death.

Of the account of the conduct of the court written by madame Roland, general Servan the only principal actor who still remains, has given me many illustrations. Servan, as minister of war, had to contend not only with the enemies on the frontiers, but with those much more formidable to the state, in the Tuilleries. His office compelled him to hold longer

communications with the king than the other ministers—if that could be called so which was only a continued altercation.—His duty prompted him to explain to him that his conduct was precipitating himself as well as the kingdom to ruin, and that the whole tenor of it discovered him to be hostile to the constitution, as well as to the interest of the state. “The king seemed at times so thoroughly convinced,” says Servan, “that I deceived myself into a belief that the next meeting he would assent to the propositions offered him: but in the interval he had been assailed and hardened into resistance in favour of Austria, by the queen—in favour of the priests, by madame Elisabeth; so that it required going the same round of argument to bring him again to conviction. The king sometimes appealed to Servan as knowing, from having been long at court, the rectitude of his intentions; to which

Servan.

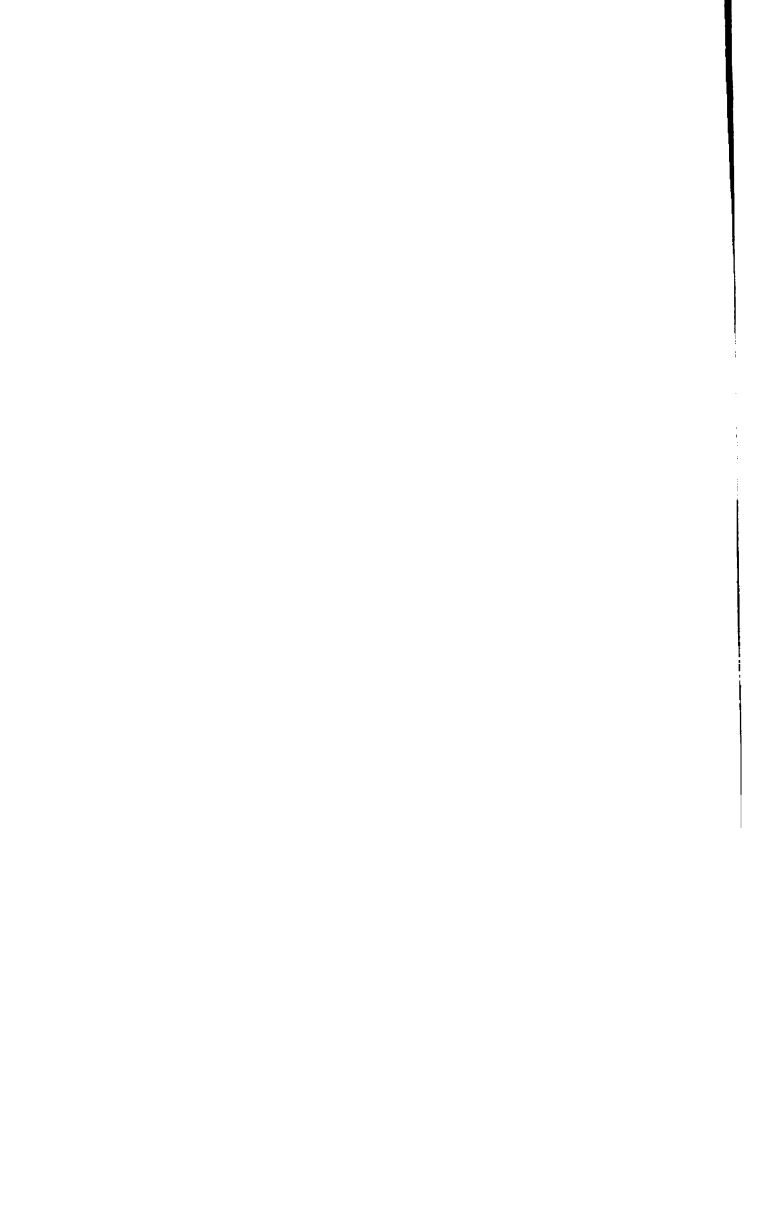
van never would assent: on the contrary, he told him that his weakness, which was criminal, would never be any shield against the indignation of the people, who would not enter into distinctions. Sometimes Servan finding no good was to be done that day, sat down to write till the hour when the council broke up, which distressed the king exceedingly; who frequently interrupted him by asking if he was taking notes of their conversation. No secretary was allowed, though decreed by the constitution, and repeatedly insisted on by Rod and Servan; the former of whom brought his great morocco covered book, under his arm, to the great diversion of Servan, in order to enter the records: but the king persisted in his refusal, and the pages remained from the first to the last unaltered.

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